

REVELATION TO EVERY NATION

Good Advice from our Best Friend Part I

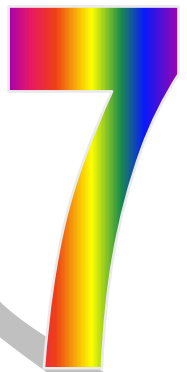


In the lessons studied so far, we have looked at 20 verses of Revelation Chapter 1, which is the introduction to the Seven Churches, and to the whole book. In this lesson we will start our study of the message to the Seven Churches, which is found in Chapters 2 and 3. We will notice that the Seven Churches are the history of the church from the time of John until the Second Coming. The church is signified in the Bible as a woman or wife, and Christ as the Husband and Bridegroom (Eph 5:22-32; Isa 54:4, 5; Jer 6:2; 2 Cor 11:2). The marriage to Christ by the Church is a covenant (Mal 2:4-14). If we do not comply with the conditions of the marriage covenant we are strangers from God and without hope (Eph 2:12). The periods of the Seven Churches are the probationary time of engagement (espousal) given, to determine our fitness to be included as part of the bride of Christ (2 Cor 11:2). There is an investigation into our works (Rev 2:2, 5, 9, 13, 26; 3:1, 2, 8, 15), and if we overcome sin as Jesus did, we will be rewarded with all the marvelous marriage gifts of the heavenly paradise (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). Our best friend Jesus is giving us the power to overcome Satan and sin (Rev 12:10), and the good advice, or counsel needed to be clothed appropriately with righteousness for the wedding (Rev 3:18; 19:7, 8).

THE SEVEN CHURCHES SYMBOLIC OF SEVEN PERIODS

1. There are Seven Churches in Revelation. How many times is the number seven mentioned specifically with different symbolic figures?

Ans: a. Rev 1:4 John to the Seven _____, b. Rev 1:12 Seven golden _____, c. Rev 1:16 Seven _____, d. Rev 3:1 Seven _____ of God, e. Rev 4:5 Seven _____ of _____, f. Rev 5:1 Seven _____, g. Rev 5:6 having Seven _____ and Seven _____, h. Rev 8:2 Seven _____, and to them were given Seven _____, i. Rev 10:3 Seven _____, j. Rev 11:13 Seven _____, k. Rev 12:3 having Seven _____, and Seven _____, l. Rev 15:1 Seven last _____, m. Rev 15:7 Seven golden _____, n. Rev 17:9



the Seven _____ are Seven _____, o. Rev 17:10 Seven _____

Fifty-four times the number Seven is found in Revelation to show us some important message. There are also other hidden Sevens not mentioned by number, which are quite significant. “Jesus Christ” is mentioned Seven times (Rev 1:1, 2, 5, 9; 12:17; 22:21) along with “blessed”(Rev 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14), and “prophecy”(Rev 1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19). There are other hidden Sevens that we will notice in later lessons.

2. What is the significance of the number Seven in Revelation and other parts of the Bible? Rev 15:1

Ans: a. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the _____ last plagues; for in them is _____ the wrath of God.

Ans: b. To bring to a close, to accomplish, to finish, to _____, to fulfil, to _____ . (See note below)

The word “filled up”, **τελέω (teleo)** in the Greek, has the meaning: to bring to a close, to accomplish, to finish, to end, to fulfil, to complete. Other examples of **τελέω (teleo)** in Revelation are the words: “finished” (Rev 10:7; 11:7; 20:5), and “fulfilled” (Rev 15:8; 17:17; 20:3). In Mt 11:1 **τελέω (teleo)** is translated “made an end.” John writes of this word in a beautiful text “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished*: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” (Jn 19:30). Here the word designates the end of sin, the complete price for our sin paid in the great plan of salvation. The end of our faith is the Salvation of our souls (1 Pet 1:9). If we endure unto the end we will be saved (Mt 24:13).

3. What other illustration demonstrates that Seven means “to end” or “complete” Gen 2:2

Ans: And on the _____ day God _____ his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.



The word “ended” here is: **כָּלָה** (kaw-law). This Hebrew word is translated “end” or “ended” 51 times, to “finish” 20 times, to “accomplish” 12 times and to “fulfil” 3 times. It has the same meaning as **τελέω (teleo)** in the New testament which is to “complete” or “to bring to an end”. The word end or ended is used 10 times in the Bible in association with the number Seven (Gen 2:2; 41:53; Lev 8:33; Deut 15:1; 31:10; 2 Kings 8:3; Jer 34:14; Ezek 3:16; 39:14; Acts 21:27). Seven was involved with something being “finished” 3 times (1 King 6:38; 2 Chron 31:7; Rev 10:7). Seven and “fulfilling” some task is found 3 times (Gen 29:27; Ex 7:25; Rev 15:8). “Complete” is also used with the word Seven once (Lev 23:15). In many other instances it can clearly be seen that the number seven completed something or brought it to an end. See Appendix 5 C for a few of them. The number seven or seventh are found 463 times in 391 verses, and 120 times in 115 verses respectively in the Old

and New Testaments. There are approximately 100 instances of something being completed with the number Seven. Without any doubt the number seven is associated with the completion or the end of the subject or task being addressed in the context.

4. What is the message to the Seven Churches called? Rev 1:3, 4 Therefore what does the number seven signify?

Ans: a. Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this _____, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand. John to the _____ churches which are in Asia:

Ans: b. The prophecy of the Seven Churches extends from the time of John until the Second Coming of Christ _____ distinct and separate _____ of time. (See note below)

The word prophecy is the Greek word: **προφητεία (propheteia)**. This word indicates in meaning a prediction of the future. We have noticed already in earlier lessons that in Rev 1:1 the phrase “come to pass” (in the Greek: **γίνομαι ginomai**), as referring to the message to be given to the Seven Churches, is talking of events: “to arise,” “appear in history,” “come upon the stage”. Therefore, from our study of the number Seven, and the added fact that the messages to the Seven Churches are a prophecy, we can conclude with many other Bible students that- “The messages given to the churches in Asia, portray the state of things existing in the churches of the religious world today. The names of the churches are symbolic of the Christian church in different periods of the

Christian era; the number of the churches—Seven—indicates completeness and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time.” [The prophecy of the Seven Churches extends from the time of John, until the Second Coming of Christ, Seven distinct and separate periods of time.](#) See Appendix 5 B. Another interesting point to notice is that the Seven Churches are signified as Seven Golden Candlesticks (Rev 1:20). The Seven Golden Candlesticks imagery comes from the sanctuary of the Old Testament (Ex 25:31-37). Everything in the Sanctuary was a symbol, example, shadow, pattern, or figure of the plan of salvation (Heb 8:1-5; 9:24). The Lamb was a symbol of Jesus (Jn 1:29). The Seven Candlesticks were a symbol of Christ and His word shining through His people (the Seven Churches) see Ps 119:105; Zech 4:1-6; Jn 8:12; Mt 5:14-16. Therefore, the Seven Churches must be a symbol of Seven distinct and separate periods of time. Ephesus was the first city on the imperial post road that passed in the exact order of the Seven Churches mentioned in Revelation through to Laodicea. This Roman Highway built about 133 B.C. passed through space from one place to another. The Seven Churches in prophecy passed through time from one period of History to another. The imperial post road carried messages by mail from one city to another whereas the prophecy of the Seven Churches carried God’s Special messages to His people from one period of History to another. The Seven Churches also were not the only churches in Asia showing that the message was not really just for Asia. Otherwise every church in Asia would have received a message. In fact there were some more important churches in Asia than the ones mentioned among the Seven. See map above. In summary: **1.** The Seven Churches is a prophecy, not only letters to the literal churches, but passing throughout time until the Second Coming. **2.** The number Seven is a symbol meaning, “complete,” or “to the end” of something, demonstrating that the Seven Churches is a prophecy from the time of John until the Second Coming. **3.** The Seven Golden Candlesticks come from the Sanctuary imagery that is always symbolic, illustrating that the Seven Churches are a symbolic prophecy. **4.** The Seven Churches were on a Roman imperial postal route taking messages from Ephesus through to Laodicea. This is a prophetic symbol of Jesus sending special messages to His people from one period of history to another from John’s time until the Second Coming of Christ. **5.** The Seven Churches were not the only or most important churches in Asia. This also shows that it was a symbolic prophecy to all God’s people in every nation through all the seven church periods not only to those literal churches in Asia.

5. The first prophecy given by God in the Garden of Eden sets the way to interpret all prophecies Gen 3:9-24. Was the fulfillment of the prophecy all-literal or how does the Bible show how the interpretation is to be made? Gen 3:14,15

Ans: And the LORD God said unto the _____, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the _____, and between thy _____ and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.



This first prophecy given by God who inspires all the prophets went from a literal interpretation (Gen 3:14), to a symbolic interpretation (Gen 3:15), then back to literal again (Gen 3:16-24). In Gen 3:15 the [Serpent](#) is symbolic of Satan (Rev 12:9), the [Women](#) of the Church (Eph 5:22-32; Jer 6:2; Isa 54:4, 5; 2 Cor 11:2), and the [Seed](#) of Christ (Gal 3:16). These are all symbols according to the Bible. This will be the principle of Bible interpretation throughout the Book of Revelation and in fact throughout the whole Bible.

This is how we will interpret the message to the Seven Churches. The only safe way for interpretation is for the Bible to interpret itself, or else it is a private interpretation, that can lead to our own destruction (2 Pet 1:19-21; 3:15, 16).

THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – DESIRABLE – 31 A.D. UNTIL 100 A.D.

6. What was the first church of the Seven called? Rev 2:1 What does this word tell us about the first period of History?

Ans: a. Unto the angel of the church of _____ write;

Ans: b. The word Ephesus has the interesting meaning of _____. (See note below)

Ans: c. The first period of _____ of the Seven that corresponded to the spiritual condition of the Church at Ephesus is 31 A.D. to 100 A.D. in the time of the _____ of Christ. (See note below)

The word Ephesus has the interesting meaning of “Desirable”. See Appendix 5 E for more information.

The first period of history of the Seven Churches that corresponded to the spiritual condition of the Church at Ephesus, is 31 A.D. to 100 A.D. in the time of the Apostles of Christ. See Appendix 5E for more information.

7. What good works were done in the first period of history (from A.D. 31-A.D. 100) by the Church of which Ephesus was a symbol? Rev 2:2, 3.

Ans: I know thy works, and thy _____, and thy _____, and how thou canst not bear them which are _____: and thou hast tried them which say they are _____, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not _____.

Paul prophesied to the local Church of Ephesus that wolves would enter in not sparing the flock. He also warned of men among them that would speak perverse things and draw disciples after themselves (Acts 20:29, 30). This not only happened in the local Church of Ephesus, but also in the period of History that this Church represented. In the Historical period these were the false apostles mentioned (Rev 2:2) (See Appendix 5 D for more detail).

I know thy works. See Appendix 5E for extra detail.

And thy Labour. See Appendix 5D for more information.

And thy patience. See Appendix 5F for more texts about this virtue.

8. Even though Ephesus had many desirable qualities what was one weakness that crept in? What did the members of this period of history need to do about it? Rev 2:4, 5.

Ans: Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast _____ thy first _____. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and _____, and _____ the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

When the disciples were still alive the love of God was strong in their hearts and their teaching. They inspired others to love God also (Rom 5:5,8; 8:39; 2 Cor 13:11,14; Eph 2:4; 3:19; 6:23; 2 Thes 3:5; Titus 3:4; 1 Jn 2:5; 3:1,16; 4:7-21; 5:1-3; Jude 21). However, when they were killed or died, that first love that the early Church experienced began to fade. God still loved them because He loves the sinner (Rom 5:8). But they needed to repent or else God could not help them.

Repentance. See Appendix 5F to learn more about repentance.

Thou hast left thy first love. It is our work to know our special failings and sins, which cause darkness and spiritual feebleness, and quenched our first love. Is it worldliness? Is it selfishness? Is it the love of self-esteem? Is it striving to be first? Is it the sin of sensuality that is intensely active? Is it the sin of the Nicolaitanes, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness? Is it the misuse and abuse of great light and opportunities and privileges, marking boasted claims to wisdom and religious knowledge, while the life and character are inconsistent and immoral? Whatever it is that has been petted and cultivated until it has become strong and overmastering, make determined efforts to overcome, else you will be lost. It is these cherished sins, abhorrent to God, that make enfeebled moral courage, and leave you to choose to walk apart from God, while you retain a miserable, heartless, outward form. Once the soul was all aglow with love for Jesus; but all this is changed. The great Head who moves in the midst of his candlesticks will never be without a church. There will be faithless ones who will go out from us because they were not of us. There will be apostasies. But "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." There will be those who are evil, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, who are sensual, who are controlled by the master-worker in all evil, who will have to be separated from the church.

9. What does God hate that the members of the Ephesus period of history also hated? Rev 2:6, 14, 15.

Ans: But this thou hast, that thou hatest the _____ of the _____, which I also hate. Rev 2:6

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto _____, and to commit _____ . Rev 2:14

So hast thou also them that hold the _____ of the _____, which thing I hate. Rev 2:15

10. What were the deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitanes?

Ans: They declare that we have _____ to _____ on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all-sufficient: that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner's credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfills the law for us, and that we are under _____ obligation to _____ the _____ of God. (See note below)

Two specific problems were associated with the doctrine of Balaam and the teachings of the Nicolaitanes. These two particular problems spoken of were directly against the Ten Commandments of God. The breaking of the first two commandments and the seventh commandment are mentioned in Rev 2:14. Idolatry violates the first two and fornication the seventh. But to transgress one commandment of God is in affect to be guilty of breaking them all (James 2:8-12). The doctrine is now largely taught that the gospel of Christ has made the law of God of none effect; that by "believing" we are released from the necessity of being doers of the word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which Christ so unsparingly condemned. Those who are teaching this doctrine to-day have much to say in regard to faith and the righteousness of Christ; but they pervert the truth, and make it serve the cause of error. **They declare that we have only to believe on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all-sufficient; that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner's credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfills the law for us, and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God.** This class claims that



Christ came to save sinners, and that He has saved them. "I am saved," they will repeat over and over again. But are they saved while transgressing the law of Jehovah? --No; for the garments of Christ's righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. Such teaching is a gross deception, and Christ becomes to these persons a stumbling block as He did to the Jews,--to the Jews, because they would not receive Him as their personal Saviour, to these professed believers in Christ, because they separate Christ and the law, and regard faith as a substitute for obedience. They separate the Father and the Son, the Saviour of the world. Virtually they teach, both by precept and example, that Christ, by His death, saves men in their transgressions.

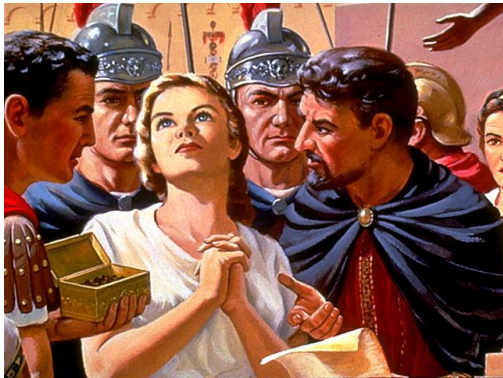
11. What promise is given to those that repent and overcome sin in their lives? Rev 2:7

Ans: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to _____ of the _____ of _____, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Overcome You may feel that you cannot meet the approval of heaven. You may say, "I was born with a natural tendency toward this evil, and I cannot overcome." But our heavenly Father has made every provision whereby you may be able to overcome every unholy tendency.

The tree of life was originally planted by God in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8, 9). After sin entered the world God in His mercy sent angels to guard the tree of life so that man would not have access to it and become immortal sinners (Gen 3:22-24). The tree of life is in the paradise of God (Rev 2:7). The paradise of God is where God's throne is (Rev 22:1, 2). God's throne and dwelling place are in heaven (Rev 16:17; Heb 12:22, 23). Therefore, the tree of life is now in heaven. Most probably it was taken there before the flood came to destroy the earth. The tree of life gives us the ability to live forever (Gen 3:22). Jesus wants to be with us forever to love and cherish each one of us throughout eternity (Eph 5:25; Rev 22:5). All that have connection with Christ have access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which the world is ignorant. After sin entered this world, the heavenly husbandman transplanted the tree of life to the paradise above, but its branches hang over the wall to the lower world. Through the redemption purchased by the blood of the Son of God, man may now partake of its life-giving fruit (Prov 3:13-18; 9:10; Jn 17:1-3; Prov 11:30; 1 Jn 5:11-13; Col 1:27; Prov 13:12; Rom 10:9; Prov 15:4).

THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA – SWEET SMELLING (WHEN CUT) - 100 A.D UNTIL 325 A.D.



12. What was the name of the church that represented the second period of history and what does this name indicate? Rev 2:8 and note below.

Ans: a. And unto the angel of the church in _____ write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

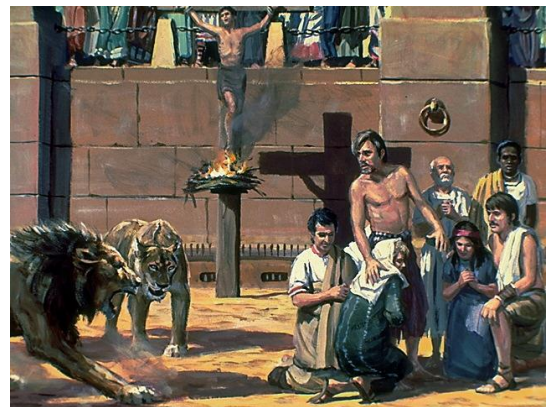
Ans: b. In summary, Smyrna is from the word Myrrh, which in the Bible is very strongly associated with Christ's _____, blood, bitter experience, sweet sacrifice, _____, anointing, purifying _____ over _____, power over _____, the giving of Himself to us forever, and His power to bear our pain and guilt.

Jesus as the one who was dead and alive has far more significance in the light of His relation to Myrrh as related to His death and ministry.

Smyrna is a word of Semitic origin (Heb., מִיֶּרֶךְ,) meaning Myrrh. The Myrrh tree is about 3 m (9 feet) tall. It is often **red** in colour. Myrrh exudes as a red fluid from resin ducts in the tree bark when the bark splits naturally or is **cut** in tapping. Myrrh then hardens slowly into globules and irregular lumps called tears, which are then collected from the trees. Myrrh was highly esteemed by the ancients; in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions, it was an ingredient of costly incenses, perfumes, and cosmetics and was used in medicines for local applications and in embalming. (from Arabic murr, "bitter"), **bitter-tasting**, agreeably aromatic, often reddish oleoresinous gum obtained from various small, thorny, flowering trees of the genus Commiphora, of the incense-tree family (Burseraceae). Myrrh trees are found on parched rocky hills. Myrrh is astringent, acting as an **antiseptic** and a **stimulant**. It was used as a **perfume** (Ps. 45:8). Myrrh is symbolic of the **graces and love** of Christ for His Bride the Church (S. of Sol. 1:13; 5:5; Eph5: 22-27; Isa 54:5, 6). Myrrh was one of the ingredients of the "**holy anointing oil**" for the **priests** (Ex. 30:22-30). It was used also for the **purification** of women, (Esth. 2:12); for **embalming (Jesus)**, (John 19:39); and it was one of the **gifts (for Jesus)** of the Magi, (Matt. 2:11). It was mixed with other ingredients to **deaden the pain** of those suffering on the cross (Mk 15:23). See Appendix 5F on the literal setting of the city of Smyrna.

The name Smyrna is rich in beautiful symbolism about Jesus and His love for us. Jesus was **cut** off (crucified) for us (Dan 9:26). Just as the Myrrh Tree was cut and brought forth red gum, Jesus when He was cut off shed His blood (that was **red**) to wash away our sins (Jn 19:34; Rev 1:5). Jesus had **bitter** words sarcastically thrown at Him, and even **tasted** death (a bitter experience) for every man (Ps 64:1-3; Mt 27:39-44; Lk 23:35-37; Heb 2:9). An antiseptic is a substance used to destroy infectious microorganisms that could kill the victim. Jesus became like an **antiseptic** for us to destroy the works of the Devil or sin from killing us forever (1 Jn 3:8). Stimulants are used to increase wakefulness, alertness and brain activity. When Christ through the prophecies points to the nearness of His coming, and the urgency of being ready always, it acts as a spiritual **stimulant** (Mt 24:42-44; Mk 13:32-37). Christ's death was a sweet smelling savour or **perfume** when He offered Himself for our sins (Eph 5:1, 2). Our Saviour showed His wonderful **love** for us in dying for us while we were His enemies (Rom 5:8-10). Jesus was **anointed** with the **Holy Spirit** (of which **oil** is a symbol Zech 4:1-6) so that He could go about healing and doing good (and could heal us from sin also) and therefore became our High Priest (Acts 10:38; 1 Pet 2:24; Heb 2:17, 18; 4:15). Because of the cleansing blood of Christ we can have a total **purification** from sin in this life (1 Jn 3:3; Acts 15:8, 9; 2 Cor 7:1; Heb 12:14; 2 Pet 1:4; 3:14 Rom 6:12, 13). Myrrh was among the spices that were used to embalm Jesus (Jn 19:39). Jesus death was for **embalming** so that we could be preserved until the Second Coming if we should die or if we are alive (Jn 11:25; Jude 24,25; 1 Thes 4:16-18). Therefore, we can be happy to give our life as a **gift** or living sacrifice of love to Jesus who gave Himself for our salvation (Rom 12:1, 2; Gal 1:4; Titus 2:14). Jesus the Lamb would not accept any Myrrh to **deaden the pain** of the cross (Mk 15:23). However, He suffered for our grief, and sorrow, and sin, to deaden the pain of eternal death and separation from God (Isa 53:3-6; Heb 4:15; Isa 63:9).

In summary, Smyrna is from the word Myrrh, which in the Bible is very strongly associated with Christ's death, blood, bitter experience, sweet sacrifice, love, anointing, purifying power over sin, power over death, the giving of Himself to us forever, and His power to bear our pain and guilt. Jesus as the one who was dead and alive has far more significance in the light of His relation to Myrrh as related to His death and ministry. For more information on "The First and the Last, which was Dead and Alive See lesson 4 Question 10.



13. What did Jesus say about the church of Smyrna? Rev 2:9

Ans: I know thy works, and tribulation, and _____, (but thou art _____) and *I know* the _____ of them which say they are _____, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of _____.

Synagogue of Satan. Christ speaks of the church over which Satan presides as the synagogue of Satan. Its members are the children of disobedience. They are those who choose to sin, who labor to make void the holy law of God. It is Satan's work to mingle evil with good, and to remove the distinction between good and evil. Christ would have a church that labors to separate the evil from the good, whose members will not willingly tolerate wrong-doing, but will expel it from the heart and life. Whoever commits sin is of the Devil and become his children (1 Jn 3:8-10; Jn 8:39-47). The Devil plants tares among the wheat in the church, even as he had his representative (Judas) with the twelve disciples (Mt 13:37-43; Jn 6:70; 13:2, 26-30). But Satan has his own so-called Christian churches and ministers (2 Cor 11:13-15). In future studies we will learn more on how to identify his churches and ministers.



14. What were the members of the period of time that the Smyrna Church represented rich in? James 2:5

Ans: Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in _____, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

15. How could someone claim to be a Jew but really be of the synagogue of Satan? Who is a true Jew today? Rom 2:28, 29; 9:6, 7; Gal 3:28, 29.

Ans: a. For he is not a Jew, which is one _____; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; But he *is* a Jew, which is one _____; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God. Rom 2:28, 29.

Ans: b. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all _____, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all _____; but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called Rom 9:6, 7.

Ans: c. There is neither _____ nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* _____, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:28, 29.

Jews or Israelites were never saved by their ethnic origin (either in the Old Testament or the New Testament), but by their faith in Christ. In fact if we are not spiritual Jews we can never be saved (Eph 2:11, 12). To accept Christ as our personal Saviour, repenting of our sins, and then obeying Him, is the way to become a spiritual Jew (Gal 3:26-29). We will examine this interesting subject in more detail in Revelation chapter seven.

16. What encouragement did Jesus give for the period of History that Smyrna Represented? Which period of History corresponds to this message? Rev 2:10

Ans: a. Fear _____ of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a _____ of life.

Ans: b. . . . The last and some of the worst persecution suffered by the Smyrna period was during the reign of _____ from A.D. 303-313. DIOCLETIAN issued an edict for the persecution of Christians. He ordered cessation of meetings, destruction of churches, deposition of officers, imprisonment of believers and destruction of the Scriptures. They were punished by loss of property, exile, imprisonment, and execution by the sword or wild beasts. Many were sent to labor camps where they were worked to death in the mines. Multitudes perished, about 10,000 of these in Britain. The last persecution ended in 324 A.D. at the death of Licinius. Therefore the Smyrna period extended from 100 A.D. until _____ A.D. with some very cruel persecution. See note below.

In Question 11 it has been noticed that the name Smyrna represents bloodshed, bitterness, purification, preservation and deadening of pain in death. Jesus' title of encouragement was He that "was dead, and is alive" to help the many that would be killed through this period to have faith in Him that had died before them and had the keys of hell and death (Rev 1:18). The tribulation mentioned in Rev 2:9 is associated with death in Rev 2:10. The last text to the Church of Smyrna is also talking about death Rev 2:11. Therefore, every text of the message to the period of History represented by Smyrna is a time of persecution, bloodshed, bitterness and death for the Christians. According to the historians the first organized persecution of Christians after 100 A.D. began in 112 A.D. when Trajan was emperor of the Roman Empire (See Wetzel – Chronology of Biblical Christianity p. 74). The worst periods of persecution were during the emperors Trajan A.D. 98-117, Hadrian A.D. 117-138, Aurelius A.D.168-177, Severus A.D. 200-211, Maximinus A.D. 235-237, Decius A.D. 250-253, Valerian A.D. 257-260, Aurelian A.D. 275, and Diocletian A.D. 303-313.

Tribulation ten days. In Bible prophecy 1 day = 1 year Num 14:34; Ezek 4:6. Because the Seven Churches are a symbolic prophecy the ten days are ten literal years. **The last and some of the worst persecution suffered by the Smyrna period was during the reign of Diocletian from A.D. 303-313. DIOCLETIAN issued an edict for the persecution of Christians. He ordered cessation of meetings, destruction of churches, deposition of officers, imprisonment of believers and destruction of the Scriptures. They were punished by loss of property, exile, imprisonment, and execution by the sword or wild beasts. Many were sent to labor camps where they were worked to death in the mines. Multitudes perished, about 10,000 of these in Britain. The last persecution ended in 324 A.D. at the death of Licinius.**

Therefore the Smyrna period extended from 100 A.D. until 325 A.D. with some very cruel persecution. Jesus was always suffering with his people during this period as if each cruel act was being done to Him (Mt 25:40). In fact He could feel the pain and affliction of each person with them (Heb 4:15; Isa 63:9). Jesus also suffers when we are hurting too. He longs to take us home where there will be no more death, or sorrow, or crying, or pain and God Himself will personally wipe away the tears from all of our eyes (Rev 21:4).



17. Which promise does Jesus give to the persecuted of this period and of all time if they overcome? Rev 2:11

Ans: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be _____ of the second _____.

The Second death is final (Rev 20:14). If we have Jesus as our Savior and High Priest, our names will be written in the Lamb's Book of life, and we will not suffer the second death where all the wicked shall perish (Rev 21:27; 20:15).

18. Would you like to have Jesus' protection when you are hurt, persecuted, or your life is threatened? _____

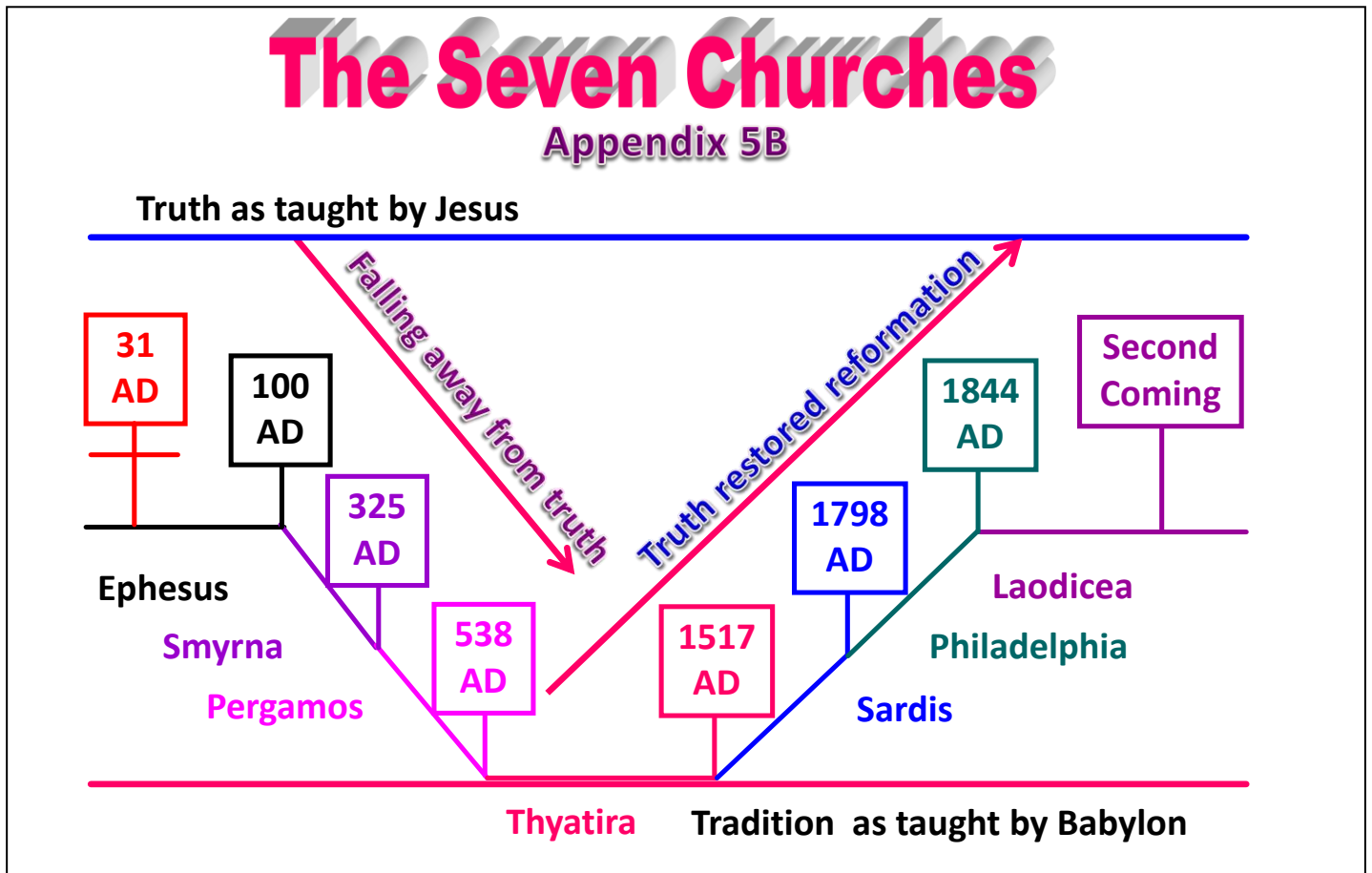
Christ's Messages to the Seven Churches

Appendix 5A

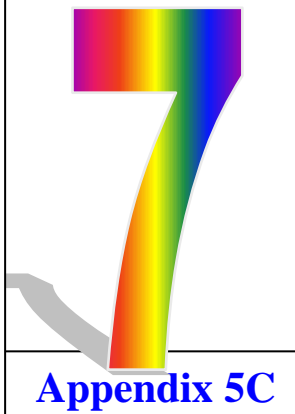


Name	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
Period	31-100 AD	100 – 325 AD	325 – 538 AD	538 – 1517 AD	1517 –1798 AD	1798-1844 AD	1844 – End
Description of Christ in relation to each church	He holds 7 stars in His right hand He walks in the middle of the 7 Candlesticks	He that has the sharp sword with two edges	He is the First and last He was Dead and is alive	He is the Son of God who has Eyes like a flame of fire And feet like fine brass	He has the 7 Spirits of God And the 7 Stars	He is Holy He is True He has the key of David He opens and shuts the door	He is the Amen He is the Faithful and true witness He is the beginning of the creation of God

Jesus knows about each church their	Christ Knows	Works Labour Patience	Works Tribulation Poverty	Works Dwelling where Satan's seat is.	Works Faith Service Patience	Works	Works
Christ's commendation	Can't bear Evil Test Teachers Hate Nicolaitanes	You Are Rich	Hold fast My Name Not denied the faith	Last Works better than the first	A few have not defiled their garments	Kept My word Not denied My name	
Christ's counsel	Repent!, Remember Return to First love And First works	Don't Fear Be Faithful unto death	Repent!	Repent!	Repent! Remember! Awake! Strengthen!		
Christ's rebuke	Left First Love		Some Baalaamites And Nicolaitanes	Tolarates Jezebel Wont Repent	Works Imperfect Seems alive but dead		Lukewarm Poor, Blind Naked
Warning	I Will Remove Candlestick		I will make war	Sickbed Great Tribulation Death	I will come as a thief		I will Spew out
Christ's promised reward to overcomers	Eat from tree of life	Crown of Life	Hidden Manna White Stone New Name	Rod to Rule Nations Morning Star	White garments Walk with Me Confess Name Not Blot out	Pillar in Temple Name of God written on them City of new Name	Sup with Me Sit with Me on throne
False Jews		Slander You				Will Worship At your feet	



Significance of Seven in the Bible



Complete Creation	And on the seventh day God ended (Completed/Finished) his work.	Gen 2:2
Complete Submission	And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother	Gen 33:1
Complete Witness	For <i>these</i> seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me	Gen 21:30
Complete Mourning	and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.	Gen 50:10
Complete Atonement	And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle <i>it</i> with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.	Lev 16:14
Complete Sacrifice	And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year	Lev 23:18
Complete Rejoicing	ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.	Lev 23:40
Complete Cleansing	And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.	2 Kings 5:10
Complete Binding	And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs (Cords) that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.	Judges 16:7
Complete Possession	And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,	Luke 8:2
Complete Work of Holy Spirit	John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace <i>be</i> unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;	Rev 1:4
Complete Power (Seven Horns)	and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.	Rev 5:6
Complete Knowledge (Seven Eyes)	and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth	Rev 5:6
Whole Church in God's Hands (Seven Stars)	And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.	Rev 1:16
Complete Wrath of God	And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.	Rev 15:1

Historical information on Ephesus

Appendix 5 D



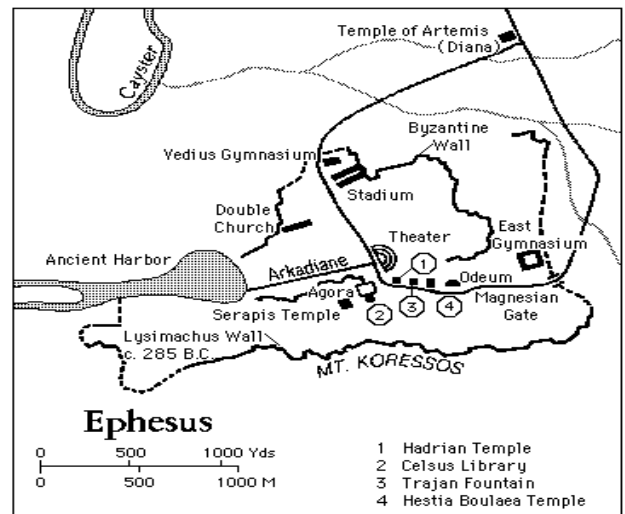
The marble paved Arcadian way looking from the amphitheater at ancient Ephesus

Anatolian fertility goddess, later identified with Greek Artemis and Latin Diana (different names for the same goddess).

A port city of western Asia Minor, Ephesus lay between Smyrna and Miletus. After dedicating a sacred precinct to Rome and Caesar in 29 B.C., Ephesus enjoyed the height of its prosperity in the first and second centuries A.D. as the fourth largest city in the Empire. As the harbour silted up, the city declined in the Byzantine period (ca. fifth to tenth centuries A.D.), but a new wall and churches were built. The Turkish town of Seljuk today is the sixth city on the site.

Ephesus was the most important city in the Roman province of Asia, on the West Coast of what is now Asiatic Turkey. It was situated at the mouth of the Cayster River between the mountain range of Coressus and the sea. A magnificent road 11 metres wide and lined with columns ran down through the city to the fine harbour, which served both as a great export centre at the end of the Asiatic caravan-route and also as a natural landing-point from Rome. It became the greatest commercial city of the Roman province of Asia. It then occupied a vast area, and its population may have numbered a third of a million. It is estimated that the great theatre built into Mt Pion in the centre of the city had a capacity of about 25,000.

This site was originally sacred to the worship of the



They that say they are apostles and are not

One heresy of the Church of that period of History that Ephesus represented (A.D.31-A.D.100) was the teaching of the Gnostics. This group was influenced by the Greek culture, which Alexander the Great had begun to spread throughout the then known world. They were interested in knowledge and wisdom, which would prepare them for the after life. They were also influenced by Persian Dualism in their teachings and beliefs. Dualism was adopted by the Greeks and then by the Gnostics.

Gnosticism is a term derived from the Greek word γνῶσις, 'knowledge' (See 1 Cor 1:18-30) and comes from Greek or Hellenistic thought in which dualism of one sort or another was often a prominent feature. Dualism was the belief that the created world was evil, and was totally separate from and in opposition to the world of spirit. The supreme God dwelt in unapproachable splendour in this spiritual world, and had no dealings with the world of matter. God was not a literal being because he would then have to be evil. God according to their philosophy was an invisible force. Matter was the creation of an inferior being, the *Demiurge*. He, along with his helpers the ἀρχιδουνοί, kept mankind imprisoned within their physical bodies, and barred the path of individual souls trying to ascend to the spirit world after death.

The Gnostic teaching of a persons' relationship to God lead to a denial of the importance of the person and work of Christ. If Christ had a body (which had to be evil because all matter is evil) they did not believe He could be God. Salvation was not understood in terms of deliverance from sin, but in discovering about one's self (See Prov 18:2). This philosophy is reflected today in New Age and Eastern religions which do not follow the Biblical account in their understanding of God and Christ. Gnosticism though it varied in belief with their different factions and leaders, was much closer to the Eastern Religions, which stem from Zoroastrianism than it is to traditional Christianity.

Both Christ's deity and humanity were challenged by this early Gnostic-like heresy. Those heretics diminished Christ to an angel whose "body" was only apparent, not real. Paul affirmed that Christ is both fully God and truly man Phil 2:5-8; 1 Tim



Diana ancient fertility god of Ephesus

3:16; Titus 3:4; Heb 1:8; 2:14-18. John also taught powerfully both the Divinity and Humanity of Christ Jn 1:1-3,14; 5:18,23; 1 Jn 4:1-6. John was, according to tradition, the pastor of the local Church of Ephesus. His strong statements about the Divinity and the Humanity of Christ no doubt reflected some of the conflict that the church members had with the Gnostic heresy. The religions or individuals today that deny the Deity of

Christ reflect some of the thoughts of ancient Gnosticism, and later Arian teachings. The warning to the Church of Ephesus is most important to us as we face these similar teachings that do not have the support of the word of God.

And thy labour

And thy Labour. Labour is a similar word to work. There is an added dimension to labour because it (Greek ← kopos = trouble, weariness, sorrow, a beating of the breast in grief, labour) includes trouble, weariness, and sorrow. **1.** There is a reward for labour as also for works 1 Cor 3:8; Rev 22:12. **2.** Labour is never in vain when working for Jesus 1 Cor 15:58. **3.** Labour is according to God's working in us Col 1:29. **4.** The motive for labour is love 1 Thes 1:3; Heb 6:10. **5.** Labour is accompanied sometimes with travail and suffering 1 Thes 2:9; 2 Thes 3:8; 1 Tim 4:10. **6.** Teaching the word of God to others is called labour 1 Tim 5:17. **7.** In Hebrews we are admonished to labour to enter into God's rest Heb 4:11. This gives us a picture of the character of the faithful members through this period of History that Ephesus was a symbol of.

The Character of Ephesus

Appendix 5E

The word Ephesus has the interesting meaning of "Desirable".

1. The Ephesians had a love for hearing the word of God preached Acts 18:18-21.
2. They had members that knew the word very well. Members of the Ephesian Church were able to teach even some very great preachers such as Apollos Acts 18:24-26. Apollos was mighty in the scriptures, so this was an indication of the high standard of instruction that they had received from Paul, who established the church at Ephesus Acts 18:18, 19.
3. Men in this church, filled with the Holy Spirit, were able to prophesy and speak in different languages Acts 19:5-7.
4. In the church of Ephesus the word of God prevailed even against spiritualistic arts Acts 19:13-20.
5. They were interested in spreading the gospel through evangelism to other places Acts 18:27, 28.
6. They turned away from false Gods Acts 19:26, 27.
7. They had heard all the counsel of God Acts 20:17-27.
8. Among their members were those that were faithful to Christ Eph 1:1.
9. The word of God was magnified (to make great) by the members of this Church Acts 19:17.
10. The work of God went ahead in Ephesus in spite of persecution and opposition Acts 19:23-41; 1 Cor 16:8, 9. This was indeed a Desirable Church.



Facade of the library of Celsus in ruins of Ephesus

The first period of history of the Seven Churches that corresponded to the spiritual condition of the Church at Ephesus, is 31 A.D. to 100 A.D. in the time of the Apostles of Christ.



Odeum Concert Theatre on the top of the hill at Ephesus

1. The Apostles loved to hear the word of God like the members of Ephesus did Jn 6:67-69; Mk 4:33, 34.
2. The Apostles knew the word of God very well even as the members in Ephesus. In fact the church was built on the teachings of the Apostles and prophets Eph 2:19-22.
3. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied, and spoke with other languages, as they did in Ephesus Acts 2:1-8; Eph 2:20. John was an apostle who wrote Revelation, the gospel of John, and the three epistles of John. The most amazing prophecy in the Bible is The Revelation of Jesus Christ written to the Seven Churches Rev 1:1-4.
4. The Apostles also taught against spiritualistic influences of Devils as did the Ephesus Church 1 Tim 4:1.
5. The gospel was spread everywhere by public evangelism of which the church of Ephesus were also active in supporting Acts 8:4,5; 14:2-7; 21:8; 2 Tim 4:5.
6. The Apostles like the people of Ephesus turned people from idols and false gods 1 Cor 8:1-7; 10:7; Eph 5:5; 1 Thes 1:9; 1 Jn 5:21
7. The Apostles taught all the counsel of God just as was taught to the Ephesians Acts 1:1.
8. The apostles were also faithful like at Ephesus, most of them even to their martyrdom 1 Cor 7:25; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 4:7, 8.
9. The Apostles, as in Ephesus magnified the word of God, so that the whole world heard the Gospel in their lifetime Rom 16:26; Col 1:5, 6, 23.
10. The Apostles when doing the work of God suffered persecution and opposition, as did the Ephesians Acts 8:1-8; 11:18-21; 22:21,22; 23:13,14; 1 Cor 15:30; 2 Cor 11:23-26; Gal 4:29; 5:11. This was a period of History when the Church was in a Desirable spiritual condition, especially at the early stages



Ruins of Agora market place of Ephesus

I know thy works. This phrase is used seven times in the messages to the

Seven Churches.

1. Jesus wants our good works to shine before men to glorify God Mt 5:16; 1 Pet 2:12.
2. Wonderful works do not prove that the person doing them is genuine Mt 7:21-23.
3. When Jesus comes back the second time He will reward every man according to his works, some good, some bad Mt 16:27; Rev 22:12; 2 Tim 4:14; 2 Cor 5:10.
4. The believer in Christ will do even greater works than those that Christ did Jn 14:12.
5. Good works show that we have truly repented Acts 26:20.
6. Grace is given before good works are demonstrated in the life Rom 11:6.
7. We are not justified by works without faith other wise it is dead works Gal 2:16; Rom 2:13; Heb 6:1; 9:13, 14.
8. We are not saved by works but by grace through faith Eph 2:8-10; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5.
9. Works of darkness are to be shunned and reproved by the believer in Christ Eph 5:11.
10. Wicked works make us enemies in our mind to God Col 1:19-23.
11. The Word of God furnishes (*Greek = ἐξαρτιζω = exartizo* enables us to accomplish) all good works. 2 Tim 3:15-17.
12. Evil works cause us to deny Christ Titus 1:16.
13. Those that love God will be zealous (*Greek ζηλωτής zelotes* eagerly desirous of doing) good works Titus 2:14.
14. Those that believe in God maintain their good works so that they will not be unfruitful Titus 3:8, 14.
15. Our works without Christ are of no value, but God must work in us as we co-operate with Him Heb 4:10; Phil 2:12, 13.
16. It is the duty of the Christian to provoke other believers to love and good works Heb 10:24.
17. Faith without works is dead James 2:14-26.
18. Faith when it is accompanied by good works will justify us, because it shows God working in us James 2:14-26; Phil 2:12, 13.
19. Jesus came to destroy the works of the Devil (sin) in our lives 1 Jn 3:8, 9.
20. Those that are evil in their works will kill those that are doing good works 1 Jn 3:12.
21. Christians are admonished to keep the works of Jesus unto the end Rev 2:26.
22. If our works are not perfect before God we are likely to die spiritually Rev 3:1,2
23. The works of those that love Jesus follow them after they die Rev 14:13.
24. All the works of the good and bad are written in the books of judgement, and they will be judged according to their works Eccl 12:13, 14; Rev 20:12, 13. Our good works cannot save us, but we cannot be saved without them either, because it is the evidence of God working in us by His grace Phil 2:13; Eph 2:8-10. This is why Jesus always investigates the works of every individual in every Church period through until the end. All their works are recorded in the books of judgement and every sin must be repented of. Five of the Seven Churches had things to be repented of Rev 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 19. When our sins are repented of they can be blotted out forever (Acts 3:19) and Jesus will be able to take us into the Heavenly home He has prepared for us Jn 14:1-3. This is why Jesus our best friend is so interested in our works.

Patience and Repentance

Appendix 5 F

And thy patience. “Patience” when looking at the Greek dictionary (ὕπομονή = hypomone) means *cheerful or hopeful endurance or waiting*. Patience is characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings. He is steadfast and constant under all circumstances. **1.** Patience is the character quality by which our souls are possessed (Greek = κτάομαι = ktaomai = obtain, purchase, provide, acquire, or to procure a thing for one’s self) Lk 21:19. **2.** It is tribulation (Greek = θλίψις = thlipsis = affliction, anguish, persecution, distress, oppression, troubled, or burdened) that brings patience Rom 5:3. **3.** Patience brings experience and hope. Rom 5:4. **4.** The God of patience and consolation helps us to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus Rom 15:5. **5.** Ministers of God approve themselves through patience, afflictions, distresses and other testing experiences 2 Cor 6:4-10. **6.** The glorious power of God strengthens us with all might for all patience and longsuffering with joy. Col 1:11. **7.** Patience of Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ without ceasing is a commendable way 1 Thes 1:2, 3. **8.** Patience and faith work together to help us through persecutions and tribulations 2 Thes 1:4. **9.** Through faith and patience, after the believer has done the will of God, he inherits the promises Heb 6:12-15. **10.** Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith inspires us to run with patience the race of life that is set before us Heb 12:1, 2. **11.** The trying of our faith brings patience James 1:3. **12.** When patience has done its perfect work the believer is perfect and entire wanting nothing James 1:4. **13.** The prophets are an example of suffering affliction and patience James 5:10. **14.** Job is a good example of patience, and his experience demonstrates how the Lord is pitiful, and of tender



Arcadian way Ephesus



The market place and central part of old Ephesus

Jesus also preached repentance. Repentance is the first step after coming to God Mt 4:17. **3.** Jesus came not to call the righteous to repentance but sinners Mt 9:13.

4. Repentance comes before the remission (Greek = ἄφεσις aphesis = forgiveness) Mk 1:4. **5.** Repentance comes even before belief Mk 1:15. **6.** When Jesus sent out His 12 disciples preaching they also taught men that they should repent Mk 6:7-13. **7.** Baptism is of repentance Lk 3:2-4. **8.** Without repentance we will perish Lk 13:3-5. **9.** There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over 99 that need no repentance Lk 15:7, 10. **10.** If we don’t forgive others that repent of the evil they have done against us, God cannot forgive us Lk 17:3, 4; Mt 6:14, 15. **11.** Jesus told his disciples that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in all nations Lk 24:47. **12.** Repentance and baptism are necessary for the gift of the Holy Spirit Acts 2:36-38. **13.** Repentance and conversion are needed to have our sins blotted out Acts 3:19. **14.** Repentance is a gift of God Acts 5:30, 31; 2 Tim 2:25. **15.** The beginning of eternal life begins with repentance Acts 11:18. **16.** The reason why all people need to repent is because of the judgment Acts 17:30, 31. **17.** The baptism of repentance by itself is not enough without Jesus and the Holy Spirit Acts 19:1-6. **18.** Repentance is to be to God and faith is to Jesus Acts 20:21. **19.** Repentance should include turning to God with good works following afterwards Acts 26:20. **20.** It is God’s goodness that leads us to repentance. Rom 2:4. **21.** There is a type of repentance that needs to be repented of (Judas Mt 27:4), but godly sorrow brings salvation 2 Cor 7:10. **22.** God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Pet 3:9. **23.** Repentance is mentioned seven times in the Seven Churches Rev 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 19 and eleven times altogether in the book of Revelation Rev 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11. **24.** The reason for repentance is to bring glory to God Rev 16:9.

mercy, bringing happiness when the trials are endured James 5:11. **15.** Patience when added to temperance with other spiritual virtues prevents us from becoming unfruitful in the Lord 2 Pet 1:5-8. **16.** Jesus’ kingdom is based on patience Rev 1:9. **17.** God’s word is also based on patience Rev 3:10. **18.** The saints that are alive at the time of the beast power of Revelation wait patiently for the captivity and destruction of that power. Rev 13:10. **19.** The saints that patiently endure the persecution of the beast and his image keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Rev 14:12; 13:10. **20.** God’s people do not fret because evil men prosper but wait patiently for the Lord Ps 37:7. **21.** If we wait patiently for the Lord he will answer our prayers even if He sometimes says wait Ps 40:1; Ps 27:14. **22.** Those that hear the word of God and keep it bring forth fruits in their lives with patience Lk 8:15 see also Rev 1:3. **23.** Those who through patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life will receive the reward of God Rom 2:5-7. **24.** The Bible encourages us to be patient to all men 1 Thes 5:14. **25.** Those that love God wait patiently for His return 2 Thes 3:5; James 5:8. **26.** If when the people of God suffer, even for doing good and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God 1 Pet 2:20.

Repentance. Repentance in the Greek original is “μετανοέω = metaneo” that means to change one’s mind for the better, to heartily amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins. This a total change of mind that will lead the one who really loves Jesus to rather die than sin against Him Rev 12:11. **1.** John the Baptist preached repentance Mt 3:2, 8, 11. **2.**



Agora with section of crown of Smyrna in background

The Church of Smyrna

The message addressed to Smyrna reflects conflict between Christians and Jews (Rev. 2:9-10). It may be that local Jewish leaders were appearing before the city authorities or the Roman governor (cf. Acts 17:5-8) and accusing their Christian neighbors of crimes. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was martyred in A.D. 156. The account of the martyrdom makes clear that there was great hostility between the local Jewish and Christian communities at that time.

Information about the Christians in Smyrna between the time of the composition of the book of Revelation and the martyrdom of Polycarp is available in the letters of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, written early in the second century.

A city in the Roman province of Asia, on the Aegean shore of what is now Asiatic Turkey. It grew to be one of the most prosperous cities in Asia Minor. It was the natural port for the ancient trade route through the Hermus valley, and its immediate hinterland was very fertile. Smyrna was a faithful ally of Rome long before the Roman power became supreme in the East Mediterranean. Under the empire it was famous for its beauty and for the magnificence of its public buildings. It is now Izmir, the second largest city in Asiatic Turkey.