

SEVEN

CHURCHES IN REVELATION

- Church in Ephesus
- May 24, 2026
- Shalom Ministries International



The Church is God's Primary Focus

- The church is God's instrument
 - It belongs to God: My house is a house of prayers for all nations (Isaiah 56:7).
 - Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
 - Pastors is messengers: To the angel (messenger) of the church (Revelation 2:1a).
- Jesus oversees the church
 - These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands (Revelation 2:1b).
 - Jesus walking among them signifies His active presence, protection, and oversight of His people.
- Church is eternal security
 - I give **them** eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand (John 10:28).
- Jesus accurately assesses the church
 - Ephesus: I **know** your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance (Rev. 2:2);
 - Smyrna: I **know** your afflictions and your poverty (Rev. 2:9);
 - Pergamum: I **know** where you live (Rev. 2:13);
 - Thyatira: I **know** your deeds, your love and faith (Rev. 2:19);
 - Sardis & Philadelphia, Laodicea: I **know** your deeds (Rev. 3:1, 8, 15).

Why 7 Churches?

- They are literal first-century congregations in Asia Minor.
- They sat along a major postal and trade route, ensuring the apocalyptic message would be efficiently circulated to all believer.
- The number 7 signifies perfection and completeness, representing the whole of the universal Church.
- They represent the various spiritual strengths and flaws that any Christian community can experience at any point in history.
- Some interpret the seven churches as a prophetic outline representing seven consecutive periods of Church history, running from the time of the Apostles until the Return of Christ.



History of the Church in Ephesus

- Ephesus
 - It was a commercial, religious, and political importance; The temple of Diana/Artemis.
- Paul, Aquila and Priscilla founded the church during his second mission journey in AD 52.
 - Paul stayed on in Corinth... Then he left, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila... arrived at **Ephesus**, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews (Acts 18:18-19).
- Paul labored there for 2 years (56 AD): 3rd mission journey
 - Paul arrived at Ephesus... entered the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months... But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe...He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years (Acts 19:1, 8-10).
- Paul met with elders at Miletus (58 AD)
 - From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church... (Acts 20:17).
- Paul wrote a letter to Ephesus during his first Roman imprisonment (AD 62)
 - Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1).
- Timothy ministered to this church (63-66 AD)
 - As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer (1 Timothy 1:3).

God's Message to the Church at Ephesus

To the angel of the church in **Ephesus** write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God (Revelation 2:1-7).

Three Things are Commended by Jesus

- Jesus is pleased with their works, labor and endurance
 - I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance (Rev 2:2).
 - Therefore, my dear friends...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).
- Jesus is pleased with their dedication
 - You have persevered and have endured hardships **for my name**, and have not grown weary (Rev 2:3).
 - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42).
- Jesus is pleased with their sound doctrine
 - You have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false...You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate (Rev 2:2, 6).
 - Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:15).
 - They chose Stephen, a man full **of faith** and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and **Nicolas** from Antioch, a convert to Judaism (Acts 6:5).

What is Wrong with the Church?

- They (the church congregation) have left their first love
 - Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. **Consider** how far you have fallen! **Repent** and **do** the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place (Rev. 2:4-5).
- First love?
 - Lack of love for God as they once did.
 - Lack of diligent fervor to the spreading of the Gospel of Christ.
 - Legalism: I obey and Jesus accepts me > Jesus accepts me and I gladly obey.
- 3 ways to recover
 - Remember (consider): Never forget what you have lost. Evaluate where you are now compared to where you were then. What is missing now?
 - Repent: Turn around from this behavior and return to what you once had.
 - Do the first work: Restoring your first love. It will keep the church from losing its witness and eventually its existence.

Three Stages of Change Management

Stage 1: Internally Remember	How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare (Luke 15:17).	We must compare our present attitudes, efforts, zeal, and love to what they were when we were first converted.
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Stage 2: Volitionally Repent	I will say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you (Luke 15:18).	True repentance means going beyond simply feeling sorry; it requires an intentional change of mind and a pivot back to God.
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Stage 3: Behaviorally Do the First Work	So he got up and went to his father... The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son' (Luke 15:20-21).	Leading change through physical action (into tangible practice).
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The Counsel of God

- The promised rewards to every church all believers
 - Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches (plural). To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 13, 21).
- Invitation
 - Jesus invites us to hear what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. The letters to the churches were messages inspired by the Holy Spirit and communicated by Jesus through John.
 - Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).
- Promise for conquerors
 - Victor (nikonti, conqueror, one who overcomes): 1) anyone who has saving faith in Jesus; 2) Christians who successfully endure intense trials, resist false teachings, and maintain good works throughout their lives.
 - Three promises: 1) eternal life; 2) spiritual nourishment (eat from the tree of life); 3) Heavenly dwelling (life in the paradise of God).