

The Seven Churches Of Asia

The book of Revelation was written on the island of Patmos (Rev 1:9). This rocky and desolate isle is located in the Aegean Sea, twenty-four miles west of the coast of Asia Minor and about seventy miles southwest of Ephesus. The seven churches mentioned by John were all founded in the immediate neighborhood of this city. Ephesus was the leading church of the group where Paul labored with great success. These other churches may have been the outgrowth of missionary work, although we have no record of his visitation of some of the places. Tradition fixes Ephesus as the center of John's later ministry, and he probably had the oversight of the seven churches.

Ephesus

The orthodox church, Rev 2:1-7

Virtues Commended

Good works, patience, sound doctrine, church discipline, stead-fastness, hatred of evil, Rev 2:2-3, 6

Sins And Weaknesses Rebuked

Loss of love and backsliding, Rev 2:4-5

Promises To Overcomers

Heavenly food, Rev 2:7

Type Of Historical Eras

Late apostolic age

Type Of Churches

Active churches, overemphasizing orthodoxy, but lacking in spiritual fervor.

Smyrna

The poor, rich church, Rev 2:8-11

Virtues Commended

Spiritual endurance, heavenly treasures, Rev 2:9-10

Sins And Weaknesses Rebuked

No reproof

Promises To Overcomers

A crown of life, Rev 2:10

Type Of Historical Eras

The early centuries of persecution

Type Of Churches

Missionary and other churches enduring persecution

Pergamum

The church with bad surroundings, Rev 2:12-17

Virtues Commended

Steadfastness amid evil environment, Rev 2:13

Sins And Weaknesses Rebuked

Tolerance of corrupt doctrines and heretics, Rev 2:14-15

Promises To Overcomers

Hidden spiritual blessings, divine food, a new name, Rev 2:17

Type Of Historical Eras

The age of Constantine, temporal prosperity

Type Of Churches

The churches supported by the government

Thyatira

The church of the evil prophetess, Rev 2:18-29

Virtues Commended

Charity, spiritual service, faith, and patience, Rev 2:19

Sins And Weaknesses Rebuked

Lax discipline and tolerance of a corrupt prophetess, Rev 2:20-23

Promises To Overcomers

Spiritual dominion and illumination, Rev 2:26-28

Type Of Historical Eras

The age of papal apostasy

Type Of Churches

The development of numerous modern cults

Sardis

The dying church, Rev 3:1-6

Virtues Commended

None for the majority of the members, a few commended for purity, Rev 3:4

Sins And Weaknesses Rebuked

Extreme formalism, spiritual death imminent, inactivity, Rev 3:1

Promises To Overcomers

A robe of righteousness, heavenly record and recognition, Rev 3:5

Type Of Historical Eras

The Middle Ages

Type Of Churches

Churches which manifest a growing formalism accompanied by spiritual decline

Philadelphia

The weak but loyal church, Rev 3:7-13

Virtues Commended

Keeping of "the Word," testimony, Rev 3:8

Sins And Weaknesses Rebuked

None recorded

Promises To Overcomers

To become spiritual pillars bearing a divine inscription, Rev 3:12

Type Of Historical Eras

The period of the Reformation, Luther's times

Type Of Churches

All earnest spiritual churches

Laodicea

The rich, poor church, Rev 3:14-22

Virtues Commended

None recorded

Sins And Weaknesses Rebuked

Lukewarmness, spiritual conceit, no conscious need, spiritual poverty, spiritual blindness, spiritual wretchedness, Rev 3:15-17

Promises To Overcomers

Divine fellowship, spiritual enthronement, Rev 3:21

Type Of Historical Eras

The last days

Type Of Churches

Popular, self-satisfied, worldly churches