

IS THE BOOK OF REVELATION RELEVANT IN OUR DAY?

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Many churches — many believers — have little interest in Bible prophecy and like to avoid it.

You might have thought that with an entire New Testament book devoted to prophecy — the Book of Revelation — it would be hard to avoid?

All of the symbols — and Apocalyptic language — put a lot of people off.

Many churches don't believe that Revelation is yet future! They believe it was all fulfilled by 70 AD. Historic. Past. In their minds ... it's not really relevant for us.

So ... let's have a look! Is Revelation relevant for us today?

Revelation 1:1-3

1 **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave Him **to show** His servants—**things which must shortly take place.**

And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

2 **who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.**

3 **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 = REVEALING — APOKALIPSIS IN GREEK — The Book of the Apocalypse. (hence — the 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse).

Some people believe it's a revelation of Jesus as a person. If so ... it would be a secondary meaning (though Jesus appears in virtually every chapter!) BUT — **the primary purpose is to reveal what's to come — what lies ahead!**

BLESSED IF WE READ AND HEAR THE BOOK OF REVELATION. AND KEEP — PAY CLOSE ATTENTION AND PRACTICE AND DO (don't be like the man who built his house on the sand — he came to Jesus ... heard His sayings — but DID NOT DO THEM!)

Notice verses 1 and 3: **“things that might shortly take place ... for the time is near”?** How can that be? It was written nearly 2,000 years ago!

Revelation 1:4-9

4 John, **to the seven churches which are in Asia** (there were more than 7 churches in Asia — but Jesus told him just to write to 7 of them)

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

5 **and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.**

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

6 **and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father**, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 **Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him**, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

8 **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,”** says the Lord, **“who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”**

9 **I, 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.**

JESUS IS COMING! This is the HEART OF THE BOOK!!

John had been banished to Patmos. About 90–95AD. John was about 90 years old. (That is the traditional view which I and most others accept).

In recent times ... some people — like Kenneth Gentry in his book “Before Jerusalem Fell” ... think the Book of Revelation was given to John before Jerusalem fell. So not relevant today. Based on this sort of information — a lot of people ignore the prophecies.

Revelation 1:10-11

10 **I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day**, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

11 saying, “**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.**”

Verse 10: in the Spirit — like a vision. **The Book of Revelation is about The Day of The Lord.**

ANOTHER KEY!

John was to send this Book To 7 specific churches (all in modern Turkey). Out of the scores of churches available. Chosen for a reason.

THE BOOK — THE ENTIRE MESSAGE — IS TO THESE 7 CHURCHES. IMPORTANT!

Revelation 1:12-18

12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned **I saw seven golden lampstands**,

13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands **One like the Son of Man**, (Jesus liked to use this phrase about Himself) clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

16 **He 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.

17 **And 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.**

18 **I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.**

John was the “Beloved Disciple”. He has waited 60 years to see his Lord again. He falls on his face — THIS IS THE GLORIFIED REDEEMER!

There are lots of symbols in this book! But we shouldn’t feel “overwhelmed”. Nearly always ...they are either explained in the context (or elsewhere — much of Revelation refers back to the Old Testament).

There are symbols here of GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS AND STARS?

They are revealed in the next few verses.

Revelation 1:19-20

19 **Write the things which you have seen,** and **the things which are,** and **the things which will take place after this.**

20 The 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.** (*Angels — or messengers*)

John is to write — what appears to be 3 things. What he’s seen ... things that are ... and things yet to come. However ... all is not as it seems. 😊

In Chapters 2 and 3 we see the 7 letters that Jesus wrote to the 7 churches. **How relevant are they to us?** We’ll see!

But first ... in verses 1 and 3 **we read that the prophecies must SHORTLY TAKE PLACE ... THE TIME IS NEAR.**

“SHORTLY” is TACHOS in the Greek. Also translated “soon” ... “quickly”.

Yet written around 90 AD?! How can that make sense?

Let’s look at the final chapter in the Book.

Revelation 22:6-7

6 Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” **And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.**

7 **“Behold, I am coming quickly!** Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

JESUS SAID HE IS COMING SHORTLY ... QUICKLY!

Revelation 22:12-13

12 “And behold, **I am coming quickly**, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

JESUS SAID HE IS COMING QUICKLY!

Revelation 22:20

20 He who testifies to these things says, **“Surely I am coming quickly.”**

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

JESUS IS COMING QUICKLY!

Surely 2,000 years isn’t “shortly”?

Now consider the 7 churches ... and the letters in Chapters 2 and 3. What do they represent?

Typically there are 3 options as to what they represent:

- (I) **HISTORIC: Just for those churches in 90–100 AD**
- (II) **SEVEN TYPES OR CHARACTERISTICS: Good advice for all churches for all time (7 types of characteristics?)**
- (III) **SEVEN CHURCH ERAS: Chronology of the last 2,000 years until Jesus returns**

We're probably all familiar with the so-called PROPHETIC ERAS? All 7 churches run one after another from the Apostolic Days to the return of Christ.

Many in the mainstream church world have this view. ALSO HELD BY CHURCHES OF GOD — though the eras were different (one being an interpretation of mainstream “orthodox Christianity” — one being the hidden “small flock”). However ... both very arbitrary. Little to no evidence. See graphics at the end of the notes.

In any event ... the scriptures plainly point to the 7 churches being end-time!

Revelation 2:5

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.**

EPHESUS: Jesus said — I will come quickly.

Revelation 2:16

16 **Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.**

PERGAMOS: Jesus said to them — I will come quickly.

Revelation 2:22, 25

22 **Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.**

25 **But hold fast what you have till I come.**

THYATIRA: Jesus said — great tribulation . The same people are told to hold fast till I come. That would appear to be The Great Tribulation?

Revelation 3:3

3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; **hold fast and repent.** **Therefore if you will not watch, (if you are not vigilant) I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.**

SARDIS: Jesus said if they don't watch — He will come to you as a thief. When is that? **At the very end of the age!**

Revelation 3:10-12

10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, **I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world,** to test those who dwell on the earth.

11 **Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.**

12 He who overcomes, **I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.** I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

PHILADELPHIA: Jesus said He will keep these from the trial upon the whole world. Jesus said — I am coming quickly. That is the end-time!

It seems that all 7 churches exist at the end-time?

To Pergamos (third of the 7 churches) ... Jesus says He's coming quickly. I would say that is end-time! So not the era of 300–600 AD (mainstream)... or 300–1000 AD (Churches of God).

To Sardis ... Jesus warns He'll come as a thief. So — not the era of 1520–1750 AD (mainstream) ... or 1600–1930 AD (Churches of God).

The idea that the churches represent eras is weak — and purely speculative.

I would suggest a 4th option:

The 7 churches represent the Church during the final 7 years leading up to Jesus' return. It's all end-time. Most likely the 7 churches tie in with the 7 Seals of Revelation 6.

So — for example — the letter to Ephesus contains instructions for the saints in YEAR 1 — when the WHITE HORSE RIDES OUT.

The letter to Smyrna gives instructions to the saints for when the RED HORSE RIDES OUT — IN YEAR 2.

And so on — all of the way to the end.

If we look closely at the individual letters in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 — we'll see how they compare. Whether this looks plausible. 😊

If this is correct ... it solves the problem of the 2000 year “delay”. Since the whole Book of Revelation — including the letters to the churches — is end-time — then ... **once the end-time arrives — “things will shortly take place ... “the time is near” ... Jesus will “COME QUICKLY”!**

The 7 church letters are vital to you and me — to tell us how to prepare for the Seals ... and the Great Tribulation ... and the Abomination of Desolation.

Revelation 22:6-7

6 Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” **And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.** *(At the end-time)*

7 **“Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”**

Shortly takes place. Keep the prophecy of the Book — all of it — including chapters 2 and 3 which are therefore prophetic! They are not just historic!

Revelation 22:16

16 **“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches.** I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

Testify of all these prophecies for the churches of Revelation 2 and 3. (All believers in the final 7 years)

Revelation 22:16 (YLT)

16 ... **to testify to you these things concerning the assemblies; (churches)**

Everything in Revelation is concerning — or about — THE CORE — these 7 churches. In the final 7 years.

What possibly throws people off the track is Revelation 1:19.

Revelation 1:19

19 **Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.**

This looks like 3 categories? Category one — “**the things which you have seen**”. Category two being “**the things which are**”. Generally understood to be the 7 churches then in Asia Minor. The conclusion is Revelation 2 and 3 relate “to things that are”. Category three being “**The things which will take place after this**” with the prophecy of the future beginning in chapter 4.

The grammar suggests a different translation with only 2 categories?

HENRY ALFORD GREEK COMMENTARY: “Write the things which you saw and what things they signify and the things which will take place after this”. SO:

1. Write about Jesus — His appearance and His angel (the things you saw and what they mean)
2. Things in the future (which starts with the letters to the 7 churches in chapter 2 — future!)

Revelation 1:19 (AMP)

19 **Write therefore the things you see, what they are and signify and what is to take place hereafter.**

Only 2 categories — what John had seen (Jesus etc) — and then — everything else is future.

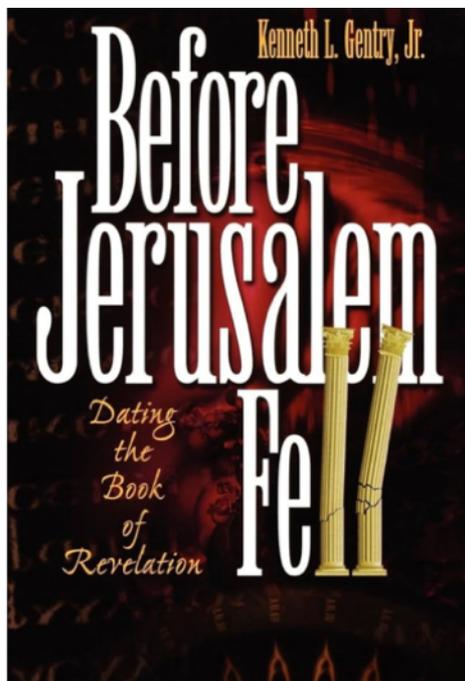
So it seems quite clear. **The 7 churches are all future.** From the verses we looked at earlier ... **we see they all seem to be end-time.**

My speculation is that these 7 churches contain messages to help us through the 7 Seals and the final 7 years at the end of this age.

Those who believe the Book of Revelation was fulfilled by 70 AD — and has no prophetic relevance for us — **WILL BE COMPLETELY UNPREPARED FOR THE ANTICHRIST ... THE GREAT TRIBULATION ... AND THE DEVASTATION THAT LIES AHEAD!**

THE WHOLE BOOK OF REVELATION — ALL OF THESE PROPHECIES WERE WRITTEN FOR US!

WE SHOULDN'T IGNORE GOD'S WARNINGS IN THIS BOOK!



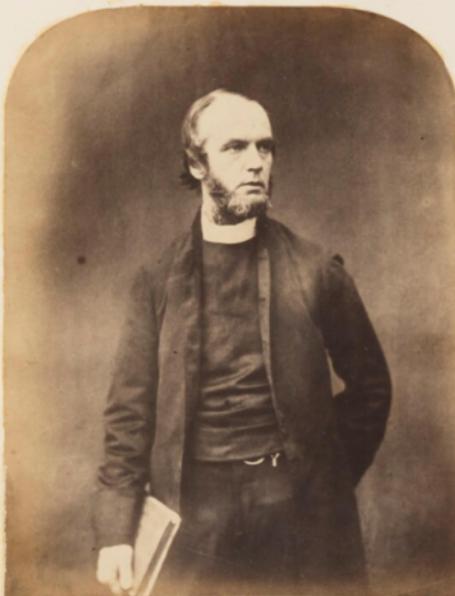
	CHURCH	DATE (APPROX.)	MEANING OF NAME	COMPLAINT
1	EPHESUS	A.D. 31–100	Desirable, Lovely	Lost first love
2	SMYRNA	A.D. 100–313	Sweet fragrance, Myrrh	None
3	PERGAMOS	A.D. 313–538	Height, Elevation, "By marriage"	Tolerance of Baalism, idolatry, and immorality
4	THYATIRA	A.D. 538–1500s	Perfume of labor, Sweet savor of sacrifice	Tolerance of "Jezebel," idolatry, and immorality
5	SARDIS	A.D. 1500s–1790s	Those escaping or remaining	Dead works
6	PHILADELPHIA	A.D. 1790s–1840s	Brotherly love	Little strength
7	LAODICEA	A.D. 1840s–Second Coming	Judging of the people or a just people	Lukewarm experience, Spiritually poor, blind, and naked

BOOK OF REVELATION

- **Messages to seven churches in Asia minor**



<u>NAME</u>	<u>Ref:</u>	<u>NATURE</u>	<u>PERIOD</u>
1. Ephesus	2:1-7	Backslidden	AD.70-170
2. Smyrna	2:8-11	Persecuted	AD.170-312
3. Pergamos	2:12-17	Licentious	AD.312-606
4. Thyatira	2:18-29	Laxative	AD.606-1520
5. Sardis	3:1-6	Dead	AD.1520-1750
6. Philadelphia	3:7-13	Favoured	AD.1750-1900
7. Laodicea	3:14-22	Lukewarm	AD.1900-



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**“WRITE THEREFORE THE THINGS WHICH THOU SAWEST AND WHAT THINGS THEY SIGNIFY AND THE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOUT TO HAPPEN AFTER THESE”
REV 1:19**