



The Age of The Apocalypse “The Church Age” Revelation 1:7-2:1b

- The Book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John in A.D. 96, some 63 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- John had been exiled to the Isle of Patmos because he refused to stop preaching that Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead, just as He said He would, proving Himself to be the Messiah He claimed to be.
- God gave John the Message of Revelation to encourage him in his suffering and to encourage all the other Christians who were suffering persecution at that time.
- The “**Person**” of the Book of Revelation is **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ,”** Revelation 1:1, and the word “*revelation*” is the English translation of the Greek word “*Apokalupsis*.”
- The “**Purpose**” of the Book of Revelation is **“To show the Lord’s servants all the things which must shortly take place,”** past, present, and future.
- The “**Promise**” of the Book of Revelation is **“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.”**

Those in positions of power and leadership think they are setting the course of this world – financiers, global political

leaders, those who control the media outlets, etc.

- However powerful as these leaders are and as important as the organizations they represent are to the operations of the world, the institution God ordained to set the course of this age is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Even though we have entered the age where the Church seems to have lost its influence, God is still sovereign over all, and Jesus Christ is still Lord of all.
- From the world's viewpoint, we are transitioning into a new world order where computers and robots can be programmed to provide a better, even much easier life for our future.
- From God's viewpoint, we are living in the last days of the Church Age, and after Jesus returns at the end of the seven years of Tribulation, we will transition into the Kingdom of God, where we will dwell with Him forever and ever.

1. The Christ of The Churches – Revelation 1:17-18 – *“Fear not: I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and death.”*

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said unto Peter, ***“I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”***

- This was the first time the word “church” was used in the Bible and the only time it was used in the gospels.
- The English word “church” comes from the Greek word “ekklesia,” which describes a group of people who have been called out and assembled for a specific purpose.
- When Jesus said He would build His Church, He was saying He would call out those who put their faith in Him for their eternal salvation and assemble them into one body.
- The “Church,” then, is that assembly of people who have been called out from the world by the love of Jesus Christ, and set apart by Him to form the Body of the Living Lord, of which He is the Head.
- While the Bible lists several things a Church should do, the one thing Jesus never asked the Church to do was to use man's methods to increase the growth of the Church.

In Ephesians 4:13ff, the Apostle Paul identified the positions of human leadership within the Church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers. However, Paul also made it clear that Christ was the “Head” of the Church, and he challenged them to ***“grow up into Him [Jesus] in all things.”***

- ***“I am the first and the last.”***
- ***“I am He that liveth.”***
- ***“I am alive forevermore.”***
- ***“And have the keys of hell and death.”***
- Human leaders will come and go, but Jesus was there at creation, and He will be there at the end of the age.

2. The Church of The Ages – Revelation 1:19-20 – VS. 20 – *“The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”*

- The seven stars were the ministers of the seven churches.
- The seven candlesticks were the symbols of the power of those seven churches.
- Stars and candlesticks are only visible in the darkness.
- The Church holds forth the glorious Light of the world against the backdrop of the darkness of sin and evil.

The churches to whom Jesus told John to send these letters were actual physical churches in Asia.

- However, Jesus chose these seven individual churches because there was something about their character that would serve as a pattern for every local church that would be started, as well as the pattern for “The Church” for all ages.
- **Ephesus** – *“relaxation”* – this church had relaxed its love for the Lord.
- **Smyrna** – *“bitterness”* – this church had suffered severe persecution from the Roman Government, and the people had grown very angry.
- **Pergamon** – *“tower”* – through the misguided efforts of Constantine, the church grew larger, but it lost its purity and, therefore, its “light” to the world.
- **Thyatira** – *“wearied in sacrifices”* – formality became a substitute for one’s personal relationship with God.
- **Sardis** – *“renovation”* – the true Church separated from the Catholic Church at the Reformation.
- **Philadelphia** – *“brotherly love”* – this church represented the worldwide missionary movement and the ministry most of the older adults grew up in.
- **Laodicea** – *“judgment of the people”* – this church described the age in which the people set aside the Word of God and judge for themselves what is right and wrong.

3. The Age of the Churches – Revelation 2:1 – *“These things saith He that holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”*

The Dual Nature of the Church:

- The true Church comprises all who have received or will receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord from the Day of Pentecost to the Rapture.
- However, there is a sense in which the word “church” refers to all the world’s religions, and even some cults.
- In the parable of the “Wheat and Tares,” Jesus said, “Let them grow side by side,” for the difference between the two would be revealed at the Rapture.
- Yes, millions will receive Jesus Christ as their Savior during the Tribulation, but according to Revelation 6, they will be severely persecuted, and many will be martyred.

Application:

- 1 Timothy 4:1 – Paul said in the last days of the church age, some would depart from the faith, others would be deceived by a false faith, and some would be taken by the doctrine of the devils.
- 2 Timothy 4:1-4 – Paul said in the last days of the church age, people will not endure sound doctrine but will follow those teachers who adjust the doctrines to fit the culture. However, those who turn away from the truth will believe in

anything.

- 2 Timothy 4:5 – Paul said the more people despise the truth of God’s Word, the more zealous we should become in making sure they hear the truth to hopefully prevent them from falling away.
- In other words, as the Church’s influence grows weaker, we are to grow stronger, until we have fulfilled our ministry.