

***REVELATION  
MADE  
RELEVANT!***

**FRIDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY WITH FR. WARD**



# Introduction

## BOOK OF REVELATION

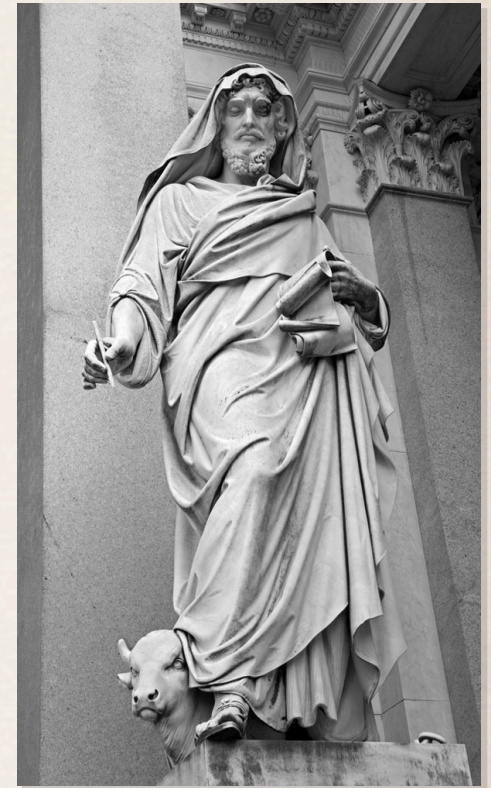
- The book of Revelation contains seven “letters” or messages from Jesus.
- These letters are addressed to churches in seven important cities in the Roman province of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).

City	Revelation
Ephesus	2:1–7
Smyrna	2:8–11
Pergamum	2:12–17
Thyatira	2:18–29
Sardis	3:1–6
Philadelphia	3:7–13
Laodicea	3:14–22

# Introduction

## Author

- John received the revelation from Jesus:
  - “The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” —Revelation 1:1–2

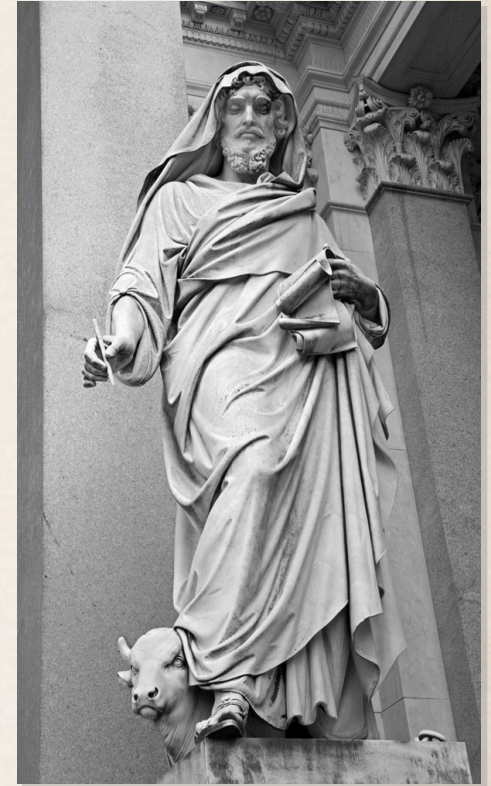


Apostle John

# Introduction

## AUTHOR

- An early tradition identified John with the beloved apostle, the author of the Gospel of John and the three letters of John.



Apostle John

# Introduction

## Date

- The content of Revelation suggests it was written during a time of severe persecution under the Roman Empire.
- Persecution occurred during:
  - The reign of Emperor Nero (AD 54–68)
  - The reign of Emperor Domitian (AD 81–96)



Emperor Nero



Emperor Domitian



† Cities of the seven churches  
— Major travel route

# Introduction

## Outline

- Prologue (1:1–3)
- 1. Seven Messages to Seven Churches (1:4–3:22)
- 2. Seven Seals (4:1–8:5)
- 3. Seven Trumpets (8:2–11:19)
- 4. Seven Symbolic Histories (12:1–14:20)
- 5. Seven Bowls (15:1–16:21)
- 6. Seven Messages of Judgment (17:1–19:10)
- 7. Seven Visions (19:11–22:5)
- Epilogue (22:6–21)

# Introduction

## AUDIENCE

- John wrote primarily for the seven churches addressed in chapters two and three.





# Introduction

## AUDIENCE

- Since these churches were located by widely traveled roads that connected them, Revelation was meant to be a circular letter.



**Circular Letter:** A messenger would read the letter to Christians in one place, then take it to another place to read it to the believers there, and so on.



## Ch. 1 Prologue

### REVELATION 1:1-2:

*“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His bond-servants what must shortly take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*

*—Revelation 1:1–2*

# Ch. 1 Prologue

## REVELATION 1:3:

*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”*

*Revelation 1:3*

# Ch. 1 Greeting and Doxology

## REVELATION 1:4-6:

*“John to the seven churches that are in Asia: 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, 5and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”.”*

# Ch. 1 Greeting and Doxology

## REVELATION 1:7-8:

*“7BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen.*

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

# CH. 1 Setting of the Prophecy

## REVELATION 1:9-12:

*9 “I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 11 saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”*

# Ch. 1 Vision of the Son of Man

## REVELATION 1:12-16:

*12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.*





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"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL" EXODUS 20:15

# Ch. 1 Final Words

## REVELATION 1:17-20:

*17“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19“Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. 20“As for 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 are the seven churches.””*

# Introduction

## Jesus said:

- “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”  
—John 15:20
- “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” —John 16:33

# Introduction

- But he was not abandoning them; he promised to send the Holy Spirit:

“Unless I go away, the Advocate [Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

—John 16:7

# Introduction

## BOOK OF REVELATION

- The book of Revelation contains seven “letters” or messages from Jesus.
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# Introduction

## PURPOSE

- In the letters to the churches, Jesus addresses the spiritual condition of each church with:
  - Praises
  - Challenges
  - Promises



# Sevenfold Outline

- The recipient church is first identified with the words, “*To the angel of the church in \_\_\_\_\_ write,*”
- The speaker (Jesus Christ) is mentioned with a reference to one of His identifying features revealed in chapter 1:12-16 in John vision.
- An assessment of the church’s current state is given by the One (Christ) who knows all.



# Sevenfold Outline

- A verdict is pronounced on the church's condition.
- Jesus issues a command to correct and/or encourage the congregation.
- There is then the same general exhortation *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches,”* which may be at the end or the second last from the end of the message.
- Finally, there is a victor's promise of reward to those who overcome.





# Introduction

## Four Views of the Book of Revelation and the Seven Churches

View:	The book of Revelation is ...	The seven churches are ...
<b>Historicist</b>	Prophecy about church history from the time of John to the end of the world.	Actual churches in John's day. Then the book of Revelation proceeds through history.
<b>Preterist</b>	Prophecy that was fulfilled primarily in the first century AD.	Actual churches of Asia Minor. The book then focuses on the land of Israel before AD 70.
<b>Futurist</b>	Prophecy primarily about the future end of the world.	Actual churches in John's day and may also symbolize the types of churches present in the last days.
<b>Idealist</b>	A non-historical and non-prophetic drama about spiritual realities.	Symbols of tendencies in the church that can occur in every age.

# Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7



† Cities of the seven churches  
— Major travel route

# Ephesus

## BACKGROUND

- Built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC  
Ephesus was the commercial and cultural center of Asia Minor.
- Population of nearly 250,000.
- Home to the Roman Governor and a “free city”



Ruins at Ephesus, Turkey

**Augustus allowed Ephesus to build him TWO temples**



**Temple of Hadrian**

# Domitian named Ephesus “guardian” of the imperial cult



Temple of Domitian (it didn't last forever)

A new cult of emperors opened there c. 5 years before Revelation



**Curetes Street, between Domitian Square and Celsus Library**

This made Ephesus the leading center of the imperial cult in Asia



What remains of Domitian Square in Ephesus



Also most prominent city (politically over Pergamum, more imperial cult than Smyrna)



A gate in  
Ephesus

# Ephesus

## BACKGROUND

- The city was the main worship center for the goddess Artemis.
- Artemis was an ancient goddess of hunting and fertility.
- The Temple of Artemis in Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



Artemis, known as the Roman goddess Diana

# Temple of Artemis



# Contemporary model



# Temple Today



Of course, paganism was not limited there to imperial worship



Ms. Asia  
Minor—  
Artemis

# Nor to Artemis of the Ephesians

A Gorgon.  
Don't look,  
or you'll turn to  
stone.



I said, ***DON'T*** look!

# Ephesus

## BACKGROUND

- The city life revolved around the temple of Artemis/Diana and its activities, carried out by thousands of priests and a well-organized temple bureaucracy.
- Social, cultural, and legal pressures were probably exerted for all citizens, including Christians, to conform to pagan worship.



# Ephesus

## JESUS

- The lampstands are the Church in general.
- Jesus walking in their midst points to his constant presence with his people.

“These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.”

—Revelation 2:1



# Ephesus

## Jesus

- Lamps symbolized the presence of God in the tabernacle (Exodus 25; Zechariah 4:2–10).
- Lamps also symbolize the presence of Jesus among his people.
- The stars are the angels of each church.



# Ephesus

<b>Strength</b>	Hard work, patient endurance, rejection of evil, perseverance
<b>Fault</b>	Is losing its identity: Forsaking its first love places the church at Ephesus in danger because love and faith are the wellspring of the believer's deeds.
<b>Promise</b>	The church at Ephesus will eat from the tree of life, the tree from the garden of Eden, in paradise.

# Ephesus

## PRAISE

- Hard work
- Perseverance through hardship
- Not tolerating wicked people
- Testing the claims of leaders
- Rejecting them when proven false



# Ephesus

## PRAISE

- The Nicolaitans compromised their Christian identity by incorporating pagan practices in their lives.
- Possibly corrupted the teachings of Nicolas from Antioch, one of the church's first deacons (Acts 6:1–5).

“But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” —Revelation 2:6

# Ephesus

## PRAISE

- The statements build on each other:
  - Working hard and persevering translates into not tolerating wicked people and continuing to believe even though some leaders have tried to negatively influence them.
- Jesus noted their carefulness and praised it.

Working hard/persevering



Not tolerating wicked people



Continuing to believe

# Ephesus

## CHALLENGE

- *Lost Their First Love*
  - “You have forsaken the love you had at first.” —Revelation 2:4



# Ephesus

## CHALLENGE

- “First love” may refer to:
  - The burning love for Jesus that Christians experience when they first believe.
  - The love that believers have for one another.
  - The love that must always be the moving force for believers.
  - The love of witnessing about Jesus to nonbelievers.





# Ephesus

## CHALLENGE

- The solution that Jesus identifies is clear: “Repent and do the things you did at first” (2:5).
- Love is not an option. It’s an integral part of what it means to be part of the body of Christ.

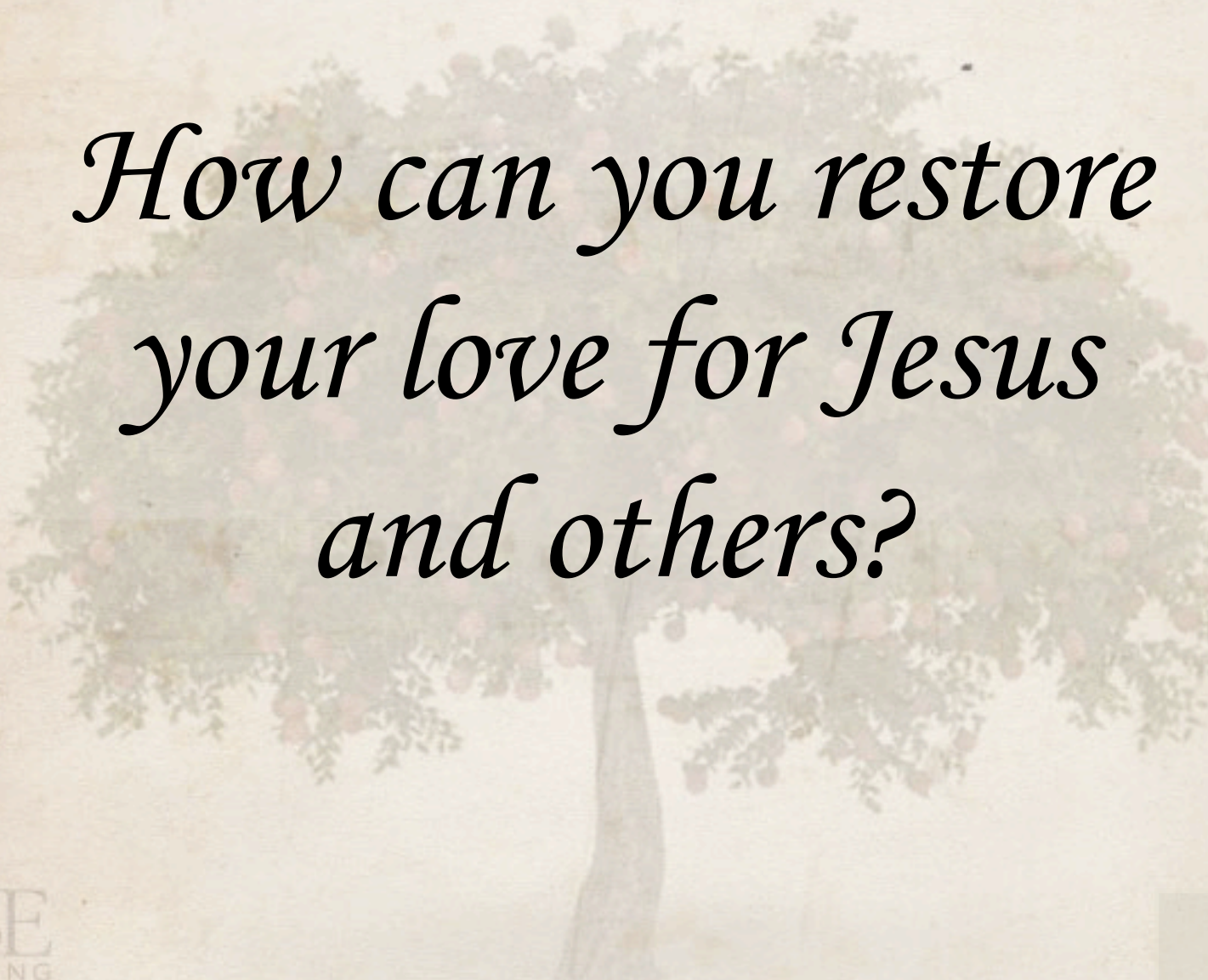


# Ephesus

## JESUS

- The final victory of the Church depends on the faithfulness of the Lamb and the faithful response of his people, especially in times of persecution and suffering.





*How can you restore  
your love for Jesus  
and others?*