

How Important is the Candlestick?

How It All Ends

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Bible Text: Revelation 1:19-2:1

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Revelation 2:1

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write...”

2:8

“unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write.”

2:12

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write.”

2:18

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write.”

3:1

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write.”

3:7

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write.”

3:14

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write.”

Here in Patmos we have John writing this letter of the Revelation to seven churches. And these churches are found over here in Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Ephesus. Seven churches in western Turkey—formerly known as Asia and before that, Asia Minor—in the late first century.

1:10

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,” Or I was whisked away to a future time known as the Day of the Lord, **“and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book.”**

So we have directions here from Jesus to John. We know it's Jesus because he says, **“I am the Alpha and Omega.”** He says in verse 13, **“the Son of man,”** and verse 18, it's the Christ who **“lives and was dead and is now alive again.”** So, this is Jesus telling John, **“Write to the seven churches.”**

Out of all the things that could have been written about, out of all the things about which John could have written, why did he pick this? Please notice the command given to him in verse 19. Remember, this is the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, talking to John saying, **“Write the things which thou hast seen, the things which are and the things which shall be hereafter.”** This would be what John had seen so far in the Book of Revelation.

Then he says, **“Write the things which are.”** So, we’re supposed to talk about the things that are going on right now and then, please notice the last thing he’s supposed to write about, **“the things which shall be hereafter.”** So, “John, I want you to write about the past, the present, the future.”

Let’s talk about the past. He’s already done that, he recorded that for us in chapter 1. Let’s talk about the present. If we’re going to talk about the present, **“write the things which are,”** he could have written about a number of amazing things in Rome. He could have written about anything happening in the government of the day but he didn’t. What did he write about? Churches. The fact that he could have written about anything but Christ has him write about churches. What does that mean to us today? The church is not just important, it is what? It’s all that matters. He says, “Alright, let me tell you what’s going on today,” and he talks about seven churches.

What is the church?

Let us identify what the church is. Look at Matthew 16:16-18

“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Why is the church the most important thing? Jesus built it. We’re not told that Jesus built everything, we’re not told a list of things that he built, but we’re given one thing in the New Testament that Jesus built.

Now look at Matthew 18:15

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.”

If the church is just willy-nilly, Christianity in general and you can find it on television or you can find anywhere outside a building, then how are you going to take people before the church if they don’t meet somewhere? Church is from the word ecclesia that means “called out.” **Question:** What are we called out to if we’re not assembling? “Hey, I want to call everyone out of your homes. Just go somewhere else. I need everyone to leave their homes next Sunday morning and let’s just scatter. We’re going to call you out and

scatter you. Everyone find a different street corner and we'll just hang out there for five minutes and then go home. Jesus said, "You keep each other accountable."

"John, write about the most famous thing happening on the planet." He said, "Alright, I'm going to write about what matters to God. I'm going to write about the church." I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but those little onsie and twosie Bible studies don't count as the church. You can't say we're going to have church at the beach and God just look at you and nod and tip his hat and say, "Well, have a blessed day." That's not happening.

Look at Acts 20:28.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

There are overseers. So, Jesus is overseeing it and how is he doing that? Through shepherds or under-shepherds. So, we have people who are pastoring the church. Please understand this, as far as Acts is concerned, you cannot say that you're a part of a church if you don't have a pastor. What else about the church? Why would it be so important to God? It is important as it is purchased with God's blood. So, Jesus built it (Matthew 16:18) and Jesus bought it (Acts 20:28). Understand that Jesus was the one who died on the cross but when Jesus died on the cross, whose blood was he carrying? God's. So, who was it dying on the cross? God was dying on the cross in the person of his Son Jesus. God bought the church with His blood.

Folks, this is really important because you need to understand the most important thing happening on the earth today is God's church and what happens through his church. Maybe you're thinking "If I'm really not all that important in the world, I'll join a church." No! God says this is the most important thing. "John, write what's going on in churches to seven of those churches."

Now look at 1 Timothy 3 and see that churches have pastors (3:1) and deacons (3:8) and now notice 3:15

"if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The pillar and the ground of truth. What is the only thing on the globe that has the authority to preach truth? The church. Now, an **illustration**: Perhaps there is one who says, "I agree wholeheartedly. I'm part of the universal church, the body of Christ."

Alright, but if I tell you that I love McDonald's, I think McDonald's is great, and that McDonald's is awesome.

"How much do you like McDonald's? Do you go every week?"

I say that I love McDonald's; it's my favorite; I am committed to McDonald's; I love the company; I love that they serve 66 trillion, and I love everything about McDonald's – yet I rarely go. I say “I can't stand going to McDonald's on Bragg Boulevard, the one on Sycamore Dairy Avenue. I don't like going to any of them.”

Do you love McDonald's?

“I love McDonald's. I'm a part of McDonald's. I support McDonald's.” Which one do you go to? “None of them.” I am a liar.

Jesus says, “I have purchased a bunch of people. I've put them inside of myself as my body and they meet in different locations known as churches.” So there's a corporate sense and there's a franchising sort of idea there. So, we are part of a church because we're part of the church. You get saved, you're a part of the church (the corporation), then you can become a member of a functioning, local church.