

The Lord's Churches.

Revelation 2:1-7 *“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”*

This book called “Revelation” is so named because it is a book containing “disclosure” which means it is a revelation of future things. This makes the book of revelations a book of revealing future events. This means it is a book of Prophecy and not a historical book as is the other 65 books. Vines said of this book, it is “the mystery,' the purpose of God in this age” that is the church age, which will end with the Second Coming of Jesus. Vines went on to say of this passage of prophecy “*is used in the NT of (a) the drawing away by Christ of the veil of darkness covering the Gentiles*”. The mystery of the Old Testament was the Gentiles and the church age. The churches were started by Jesus Christ in the New Testament age which it is believed these seven churches represent. The church age will end when Jesus returns and raptures His saints and churches. As we study these seven churches of the church age we will learn the names of these churches are significant, and the meaning of these names should help us to understand the prophecy of the church age connected with them.

If you want to know more about the church age and the Gentiles time in this age do a in-depth study of Romans 11. Verse 11 speaks about the Gentiles and church age being fulfilled. **Romans 11:25** *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”* Also the Lord speaks of this time in **Luke 21:24** *“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden*

down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Most great men that have written some great commentaries through the years have failed on the subject of the church. The church is not a Universal Invisible Institution, but a Local Assembly instituted by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. The church by definition in the Greek is an “*ekklēsia*” which means - a calling out, that is, (in a definitive or conclusive way) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation, it is also compared to a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth. – It is impossible that one can define a church as a Universal Invisible Institution. Therefore, while I love many of my brethren of old, whom I have studied and learned much from, I must disagree with their thinking that the church is a Universal Invisible Institution. Also, the thinking that there are two kinds of churches, the Universal Invisible Institution and local churches could not be farther from the truth because the scriptures never speak of such. There is no way that the Lord’s church is or is associated with Catholicism, which, I believe, is an organization of Satan and not of Jesus Christ. And last, there is not one single piece of evidence that a church started in Acts chapter 2, but that the church did exist in Acts 1 with one-hundred and twenty members holding a service, a church meeting, and casting a vote for an Apostle.

Therefore, the church, I believe, first assembled on the mountain-top, some believe somewhere in the vicinity of Capernaum, **Matt. 5:1** “*And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:*” And Jesus held a service and preached the first sermon in the first church. Then the church settled in Jerusalem and that is where we find it. This was a called-out-assembly gathered together in a local location for the purpose to hold a worship service and the congregation was fed spiritual food by her head Jesus Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12** “*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*” And Verse (18) “*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*” And Verse (28) “*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*” It is evident that any thought of any sort of a “Universal Invisible Institution” corrupts everything defined in the bible as a The Church of Jesus Christ.

Here we see not one but “Seven churches” that has defined what is called the “church age” and the history of the churches and the last is the current and future of the church age.