

THE 8TH CHURCH - FACT OR FICTION quotes

1) “**The book of Revelation must be opened to the people....**The truth it contains must be proclaimed, that people may have an opportunity to prepare for the events which are so soon to transpire.” Evangelism, p 195.

“Christ came to John exiled on the Isle of Patmos to give him the truth for these last days...telling him to send it to the churches. **This instruction is to be the object of our careful and prayerful study**; for we are living in a time when men who are not under the teaching of the Holy Spirit will bring in false theories.” Manuscript Releases, vol 20, p 150.

2) Is there any error which is safe to believe — even if it is just a little error?

“**Error is never harmless.** It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. **It is always dangerous.** The enemy has great power over minds that are not thoroughly fortified by prayer and established in Bible truth.” Testimonies, vol 5, p 292.

3) What does inspiration reveal to be the correct interpretation of what these 7 churches represent?

“The names of the seven churches are **symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era.** The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the **messages extend to the end of time**, while the symbols used reveal **the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.**” Acts of the Apostles, p 585.

There are actually 3 different ways inspiration declares that we can correctly interpret what these 7 churches mean:

#1. The names of these seven churches represent 7 different periods of time in the Christian era, which would extend from the Christian church down to the end of time or to the 2nd coming.

#2. The 7 different messages to these churches apply from the time of the Christian church extending all the way down to the end of time.

#3. These seven churches represent 7 different conditions manifested by the various churches of God at different periods in the history of the world.

4) #1. The names of these seven churches represent 7 different periods of time in the Christian era, which would extend from the Christian church down to the end of time or to the 2nd coming.

The most common interpretation held is that these 7 church names represent the following time periods:

- The time period for the name of **Ephesus**, which means “first or desirable”, is taught to be from approximately 31 ad - 100 ad. This is when the Christian church began on fire for the Lord, but gradually lost their zeal, yet they still held onto the truth.
- The time period for the name of **Smyrna**, which means “myrrh or sweet scent”, is taught to be from approximately 100 ad - 313 ad. This is when the Christian church was enduring persecution — especially from the Roman state, as well as from those in their own ranks who had embraced false doctrines. This persecution was because of their firm stand for God and His truth.
- The time period for the name of **Pergamos**, which means “exaltation or elevation”, is taught to be from approximately 313 ad - 538 ad. This is when the Christian church decided to compromise its faith and then accept into her membership only half converted pagans. The true Apostolic faith became corrupted, and then this apostate religion was embraced and upheld by the state of Rome through Constatine, which led to the birth of the Roman Catholic church and the exaltation of the man of sin.
- The time period for the name of **Thyatira**, which means “sacrifice of contrition”, is taught to be from approximately 538 - 1517. This is when the apostate religion of Roman Catholicism was being enforced by the State, and any who opposed her faith were hunted down and killed.
- The time period for the name of **Sardis**, which means “prince of joy”, is taught to be from approximately 1517 - 1798. This is when the great Reformation of Protestantism, based upon the message of justification by faith, was freeing thousands of people from the falsehood and superstition of Roman Catholic tradition and popish bondage.
- The time period for the name of **Philadelphia**, which means “brotherly love”, is taught to be from approximately 1798 - October 22, 1844. This is when the message of the soon advent of Christ was convicting people of their sins, bringing them to repentance and conversion from it, and encouraging all to help each other to get ready for His soon coming.
- The time period for the name of **Laodicea**, which means “judging the people or a people adjudged”, is taught to be from approximately October 22, 1844 - 2nd coming. This is when those who had embraced the Advent message gradually fell away from their original zeal and love for Christ and His soon return, allowing pride and love of the world to envelop them, and then fell back asleep in this time of the Investigative Judgement.

5) How many physical groups or churches of God were existing during the period for the name of Thyatira? There were the Waldensians, as well as the followers of both Wycliff and Huss, etc. These groups were raised up and used of God to accomplish a particular purpose in that time period.

How many physical groups or churches of God were existing during the period for the name of Sardis? There were the Lutherans, Anabaptists, Calvinists, Huguenots, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Puritans, Quakers, Mennonites, Brethren, Moravians, Methodists, Baptists, etc. These groups were also raised up and used of God to accomplish a particular purpose at that time period.

This shows that there can be more than just one group or church which God has raised up and is using during any of these periods -- including these last days! So then the belief that each church name period has only 1 chosen group or church of God existing in it, and all the others groups or churches that are living up to all the light they have are not being used of God, is completely false.

As God had 7000 faithful souls that were unknown to Elijah, while he thought that he was the only faithful one existing (see 1 Kings 19:14, 18), and as God had another symbolic 7000 faithful souls that were unknown to the apostle Paul (see Romans 11:4-5), so God has plenty of faithful souls in these last days who may be meeting together in groups or even churches that are unknown to any of us. Because they are living up to all the light they know, then God considers them to be just as much His people as those of us here.

This fact of truth will help God's people avoid the trap of the Devil in 2 major ways:

#1) — The belief that they are the only faithful people of God existing in these last days in groups or in church capacity.

#2) — The belief that all who refuse to unite or join with them are not to be considered as true followers of God.

6) The TRUE church of God is not a literal visible church of a particular group of people gathered together into one body. But it is a spiritual church that is only made up of individual Christians who are faithful to God. This is because we are saved as faithful individuals in Jesus Christ and not saved in groups or in churches.

"From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth." Acts of the Apostles, p 11.

"God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. 18:20). **Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church.**" Upward Look, p 315.

7) **"Christ would have His followers brought together in church capacity, observing order, having rules and discipline, and all subject one to another, esteeming others better than themselves. Union and confidence are essential to the prosperity of the church."** Testimonies, vol 3, p 445.

This call from God for His people to unite and organize together in church capacity applies to God's separated people in these last days!

"Oh read the prayer of Christ for unity, 'Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are' (John 17:11). The prayer of Christ is not only for those who are now His disciples [back in Christ's day], **but for all those who shall believe on Christ through the words of His disciples, even to the end of the world. Jesus...looks down the lines two thousand years to His church which would be in existence in the last days, before the close of this earth's history.**" Manuscript Releases, vol 1, p 355.

"There was order in the church when Christ was upon the earth; and after His departure, order was strictly observed among His apostles. **And now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of faith, there is more real need of order than ever before; for, as God unites His children, Satan and his evil angels are very busy to prevent this unity and to destroy it.**" Early Writings, p 97.

8) Uniting together with one another in church capacity is extremely important for 2 major reasons:

#1) — helping each member to obtain a perfect character.

"Perfection of character means perfection in unity. 'That they all may be one,' Christ said, 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee' (John 17:21)." Manuscript Releases, vol 11, p 179.

#2) — to show the people of the world that God does indeed have a group of people who truly love, and not hate one another.

"To a world that is broken up by discord and strife, their [Christ's followers] love and unity will testify to their connection with heaven. **It is the crowning evidence of the divine character of their mission.**" Testimonies, vol 7, p 156-157.

"Unity will bring into the work a power that we have not yet seen. **This will be the evidence to the world that the work is of God.**" Review and Herald, November 12, 1901.