



## The Convergence Factor “The Seven Church Ages” Revelation 2:1-4:11

The Bible says there will be **seven stages of the church age**, from Pentecost until the Rapture.

- The seven stages are **characterized by the seven literal, physical churches** listed in Revelation 1:11: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.
- While the characteristics of the first three are no longer, because of the lack of severe persecution, traits of the final four can be found in most churches today.
- **The Church at Ephesus – The FALLEN church – Revelation 2:1-7.**
  - The Lord commended them for their duty, determination, and doctrinal purity, but He condemned them because they had left their first love for Him.
  - The Lord counseled them to remember when they first fell in love with Him, repent of those things that had taken His place in their heart, and return to their first love for Him, or He would remove their candlestick.
- **The Church at Smyrna – The FEARFUL church – Revelation 2:8-11.**
  - This church suffered severe persecution from the Roman Government, including martyrdom.

- The Lord counseled them to turn their fear into faith because a crown of faith awaited them at the Judgment Seat of Christ, if they endured to the end.

- **The Church at Pergamos – The FALTERING church – Revelation 2:12-17.**

- This church grew larger and more acceptable to man, but in doing so, it lost its purity, and therefore, its testimony to the world.
- Jesus counseled them to stop compromising with the world and to turn back to Him.

- **The Church at Thyatira – The FALSE church – Revelation 2:18-29.**

- This church was known as a dynamic church in its day because it had all the right people in the church and the right ministries.
- But Jesus said they had compromised His truth, and as a result, they were being corrupted from within.
- In verses 22-23, Jesus listed the consequences for such activity as ***“the bed of sickness”*** and that they would be ***“spewed out”*** into the time of Tribulation, but to those who held fast to the true faith, the Lord would give them ***“power and authority”*** over the nations of the earth during the millennial reign of Christ.

- **The Church at Sardis – The FRUITLESS church – Revelation 3:1-6.**

- This church was known to be ***“alive and active”*** because of its past accomplishments, but Jesus said the church was dead because ritual and ceremony had taken the place of their intimacy and oneness with the Lord.
- The Lord’s counsel was to ***“remember and repent,”*** or else He would come as a “thief in the night” and remove their most cherished things.
- He gave three promises to those who remained faithful:
  - They will walk with Him in white.
  - Their names will not be blotted out of the book of life.
  - Jesus would acknowledge them before God the Father.

- **The Church at Philadelphia – The FAITHFUL church – Revelation 3:7-13.**

- The Lord commended this church for three things:
  - They had used the open-door God had given to them as an opportunity for evangelism and missions.
  - They had ***“kept”*** God’s Word – they were faithful to it, and they obeyed it.
  - They had not denied the name of Jesus.
- The Lord said their reward would be in two great hopes:
  - Their rejection by the world would be vindicated as those who persecuted them would be judged by Jesus.
  - They would be given power sufficient for the hour of trial or temptation.

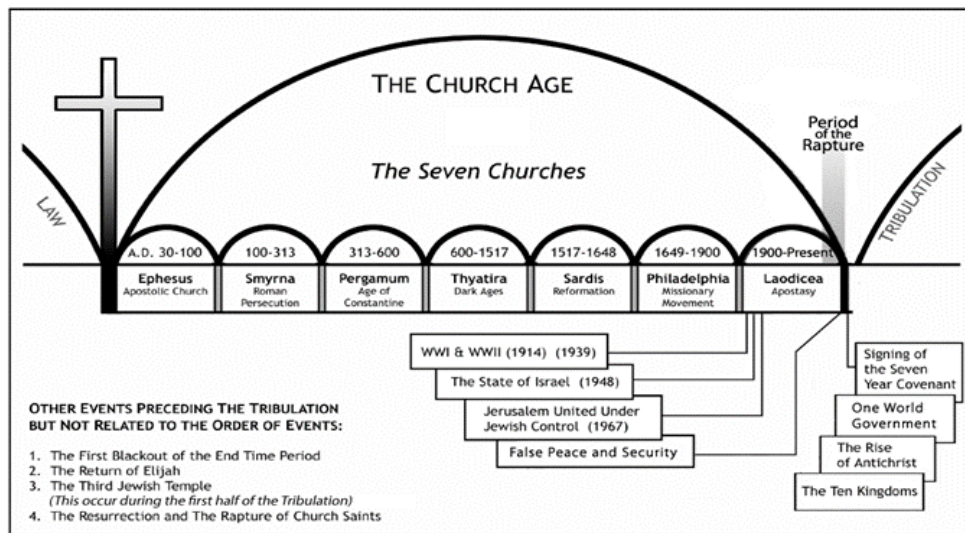
- **The Church at Laodicea – The FASHIONABLE church – Revelation 3:14-22.**

- This church characterizes “the church” of the last days of the church age.

- It is neither hot nor cold, but it is lukewarm, and therefore they were worthless to the kingdom's work.
- The Lord said He would ***"spew these out of thy mouth,"*** which means they would be cast into the time of Tribulation.
- Jesus advised them to do three things:
  - Get their eyes off of temporal things and on to eternal things.
  - Be zealous and repent of their lukewarmness toward Him.
  - Open the door of their heart and let Him in again.



***"Mr. Hunt, your painting is beautiful, but you've left something out. Mr. Hunt, you've failed to put a latch on the door. Mr. Hunt said, 'Oh no! The latch is on the inside of the door.'"***



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