

*John's Vision on Patmos**Rev. 1:9-20*

*"The seven letters to the seven churches are powerful letters, burning with urgency. Their message is still as vital and timely today as when first written. So many ills of our churches could be cured if we would only listen with attentive ears to the message Jesus gave us through the pen of John nearly 2000 years ago.*

*In these letters, our Lord outlines for us His plan for the church, He shows us that he has set His church in the midst of the world. It is His instrument to impact and direct the course of human history. Jesus calls the church 'the light of the world' and 'the salt of the earth.' The apostle Paul calls it 'the pillar and ground of truth.' That is the mystery and the mission of the church. God intends the church to exert tremendous influence over the affairs of the world.*

*These seven letters set forth His eternal 'game plan.' So it's a grievous mistake to slight the crucial importance and timely relevance of these letters. They are filled with both warning and encouragement to churches that are struggling with sin and complacency within, and persecution without. In these letters, our Lord teaches the church how to live as light in a darkening world while also confronting the sin and error that threatens the health and life of the church."*  
Stedman

- I. The church can be many things to believers, but most importantly it must be a vital Word centered, grace centered, gospel centered gathering of redeemed sinners whose sole purpose is to bear His fruit of righteousness to a dying world. Those who disregard the importance of meeting together on Sunday mornings, disregard the fact that he *gave himself up for her to make her holy... to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Eph. 5:25-27)*. Being a part of the large church, i.e., all who know Christ throughout the world, does not mean that being a part of a local **ekklēsia** is unnecessary. We know that because Jesus directly addresses seven churches, all indicative of how a church can be, to hold them accountable to how seriously they took being His representative to both the saved and the dying.

Rev. 1:9-11

Luke 14:27, 33

Heb. 12:3-4

Matt. 24:31

1 Thess. 4:16

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ἐκκλησία *ekklēsia* - an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting. The whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth. Strong's

- II. The church has one head, Jesus Christ. When we gather together to honor Him, we submit and bow to Him alone as an act of true heartfelt worship to the one who has absolute sovereign authority over His body. Anything or anyone who is exalted above Christ be it a pastor, worship team, light show, smoke machine, program, theological stance, sign gifts, person, denomination, or worldly embrace will be held accountable. Therefore, it is imperative that we make sure we remain true to Him as those who have been entrusted with the power of the gospel that saves souls and holds back evil.

Rev. 1:12-16  
2 Thess. 2:5-7  
Col.1:18  
Dan. 7:9  
Dan. 10:5-6

***2 Thess. 2:5-7*** 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

*“Observe, however, that it is not said that the restrainer will be ‘taken away,’ but ‘taken out of the way’; thus the Holy Spirit will continue a divine activity to the end-time, though not as a restrainer of evil through the church.” Oxford notes*

- III. We, as the true church, have been given direct revelation by Jesus Christ Himself on how we should live in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation (Phil. 2:15). He has written to us to keep our minds truth centered, he has given us the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom and guidance (1 Cor. 2:12), and he has assigned angels to watch over and protect his flock from the powers of this dark world and from the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12). He has put these things in place so that our lamp stand, i.e., CC Oley’s lampstand, remains shining brightly for those He is bringing into the light and are in the light through the power of the gospel.

Rev. 1:17-20

***1 Thess. 5:5*** You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

***1 Jn. 1:7*** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

