



Faithfulness to God

Revelation 1:9-20 Hebrews 12:1-13 Matthew 16:24-27

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The One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church is the *formal way* of talking about **all** believers of **all** times and **all** places. It is the sum total of all who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins.

In the **Book of Revelation**, the **One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church** is figuratively described as 7 churches with 7 golden lampstands.

- † “7” is the number of completeness in the Bible, as God created the heavens and the earth in 6 days, *He rested on the 7th day*, and everything was “very good” – **it was complete**.
- † The **Golden Lampstands** are symbolic of the lamps in the OT Temple of God which stand in His presence; these lamps shine the light of Christ as beacons into the dark and sinful world. The 7 golden lampstands are a way to describe the Holy Christian Church – God's People.

In order to comfort His People, Jesus is pictured as walking in the midst of the 7 golden lampstands.

I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw **seven golden lampstands**, and **in the midst** of the lampstands one like a Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. REVELATION 1:12-13

Dressed like a **High Priest**, with a **long robe** and a **golden sash**, Jesus walks among His People, watching over them, knowing them, working through them, and protecting them. As we live our lives in these End Times, **Jesus is assuring us that He with us**, that wherever “**two or three are gathered in His Name**” He is right there with them. He has promised us that He is **with us always, even to the end of the age!**

TO THESE 7 CHURCHES, which represent the **One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church** during the entire End Times, Jesus writes letters. Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation are some of the most familiar – “**The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches.**” The Seven Churches are real churches that existed at the time of Revelation. Those Seven Churches became representative of the entire Holy Christian Church during the End Times.

In these **7 Letters to the 7 Churches**, the Lord Jesus **teaches us** and **warns us** about the importance to remain faithful to Him as we live our lives in the End Times. The overarching theme is:

Faithfulness to God is the Most Important Thing!

Faithfulness to God is more important than even physical life!

In these **7 Letters to the 7 Churches**, Jesus teaches us how to be faithful. Using many images and descriptions, the Lord teaches us the importance of loving the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength; of remaining loyal to Him throughout our lives; of hearing and obeying His Word; of living bold and courageous lives of faith each day. The **7 Letters to the 7 Churches** teach us that faithfulness to God means that you are **repentant**, and that you **patiently endure** any hardships you may have to face.

Faithfulness to God means that you live a **REPENTANT** life. Repentance means that you turn from your sin and trust in Jesus to forgive you.

Sin is a constant danger for us; temptations are everywhere, false teachings are plentiful and deceptive, and Satan and his demons continually harass us. Repentance means that you turn from your sin; you stop sinning, you reject false teachings, and you renounce the devil and all of his evil works and all of his wicked ways. You confess your sins to God and trust that He forgives you.

Jesus is the Savior God sent for you! He took your sins to the cross where He died; and He rose from the dead on the third day. The victory over your

sin is found in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is how Jesus describes His work for you in the Book of Revelation:

"Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. REVELATION 1:17-18

Repentance is an **ongoing cycle** in our lives; **confession of our sins** and **trusting the words of forgiveness** keeps us constantly aware of sin in our lives, and always dependent on the grace and mercy of God to forgive our sins. Repentance keeps you vigilant in faith; you are alert, attentive, and always aware of God's grace, mercy, and kindness to you.

IF YOU ARE UNREPENTANT;

If you fail to confess your sins and trust God's forgiveness, you will most certainly fall away from faith.

In the **7 Letters to the 7 Churches**, Jesus repeatedly emphasizes the importance of repentance in the lives of His People. Repentance means that you turn from your sin and trust in Jesus to forgive you.

Let him who has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Faithfulness to God also includes **PATIENTLY ENDURING** difficulties in your life.

When Christians encounter hardships, pain, suffering, or persecution, frequently *they lash out at God and turn Him into some evil monster*, and when they do that, they will most certainly *fall away from the faith*.

Jesus warns us in the **7 Letters to the 7 Churches** not to let that happen. Rather than lash out at God as if He is being unfair to you, you are to trust Him through the hardships, pain, suffering, or persecution. Just as Jesus patiently bore His cross, so too you are to patiently bear your cross. Jesus trusted the promises of God in His suffering, you also are to trust God's promises in your suffering.

- † Believe that that the Lord loves you, and that He knows exactly what you are going through, and that He cares,
- † Trust His Promise that He is with you and He strengthens you.

- † Put your faith in His Promises: hold onto Jesus' promises through every trouble and trial!
- † Be confident that He is at work in your difficulty, it will not crush you, it will ultimately work for your good; you can glorify God through it all!

Hardships, pain, suffering, and persecution are great dangers that you must prepare for. **DO NOT EXPECT TO BE EXEMPT FROM THESE THINGS.** The Book of Revelation teaches us that we are living in a broken and sinful world that is getting more and more corrupt and evil; and that Christian persecution will intensify. ***You are to expect suffering in this life; we all have our crosses to carry.***

Remaining **Faithful to God** is the most important thing; and it includes **patiently enduring** any difficulties you may have to go through in this life. *Don't lash out at God as if He is some evil monster,* RATHER Humbly pick up your cross, follow Jesus, and trust His Promises!

Faithfulness to God is the Most Important Thing!

Faithfulness to God
means that you live a repentant life
and that you patiently endure any hardships that you must face.

God works through His Word and His Sacraments to keep you faithful. Faithfulness to God is marked by

A focus on Christ	Resisting the Devil	Strong faith	Stability in Trouble
Peace	Fervent in Prayer	Zealous in Faith	Good Works
Hating what is evil	Clinging to the good	Exposing Heresy	Weekly Worship

As we live our lives in these **terrible Last Days** and **ever increasingly evil End Times**, the Lord Jesus teaches us to be faithful to Him.

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and that you patiently endure any hardships that you must face.