

A STUDY OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Message

I. Reasons for the messages about and to the Seven Churches

- A. The Character of these churches is their exact condition in John's day. Thus, served as a real message and warning to them.
- B. The character of these churches is descriptive to the churches that will be established later.
- C. These characters are progressive until the day of apostasy.
- D. These messages should serve as a warning to the churches today.

II. The Message to the Church at Ephesus (Revelations 2:1-7) A *Backslidden Church*

A. The City of Ephesus

Aquila and Priscilla were known to be the first converts when Paul visited the place briefly in his second missionary journey (Acts 18:11-19). Built a Church there and stayed there for 3 years in his third missionary journey and became the center for missions in Asia Minor (Acts 19:10). After Paul, Timothy took charge of the Church for a time (I Timothy 1:3). Later, Apostle John made the city his headquarters. The city was commercial, political and religious centers, the great temple of Diana (Artemis) being there.

B. The identity of the Speaker

- 1. he holds the seven stars in his hand
- 2. he walks in the midst of the 7 golden candlesticks- Jesus must have the pre-eminence in the Church and the center of every worship.

C. The Commendations "I know thy works" (v.2-3)

- 1. it was a fundamental church
- 2. it was a separated church
- 3. it was a disciplined church

4. it was a patient church
 5. it was a persecuted but a persistent church
 6. it was an obedient church unto the Lord (v.6)
 Nicolaitanes (followers of Nicolas–Acts 6:5)- a group which promoted a clerical hierarchy, apostolic succession. ‘Niko’ means conquer; ‘laos’ means people- the control of the clergy over the laity.
- D. *The Complaint (v.4) “thou has left their first love”*
1. it was intentional “thou hast left”
 2. it was deliberate
 3. it was progressive
 Ironically, Paul commended them for their faith and love (Ephesians 1:15-16)
 - a. They left spiritual fellowship with Christ to social fellowship with man
 - b. They left spiritual labors and works to social activities and functions.
 - c. They left the Word to follow the World
- E. *The Warning (v.5)*
 Remember- Repent,
 Do the first works, or else,
 The removal of the candlestick (Psalm 51:11)
 A believer can never fall from grace, but the church can.
- F. *The Promise to challenge (v.7)*
 The definition and the method of overcoming (I John 5:4-5)

III. **The Message to the Church at Smyrna (Revelations 2:8-11) *The Persecuted Church***

A. *The City of Smyrna*

Izmir is the modern name. It is one of the major cities and parts of Turkey. Forty miles north of Ephesus. Known for its schools of science and medicine. It was the traditional birthplace of Homer. The temple of Boccabo, god of wine, was there.

B. *The Origin of the word “Smyrna”*- has for it’s root meaning “bitterness” and means ‘myrrh’- an ointment associated with

death. Even in the meaning we see the prophecy of what becomes of the Smyrna Church.

C. *The Identity of the Speaker*

1. The first and the last
2. Which was dead and alive

We are not just serving a man- He is before all things
(Colossians 1:16-17)

We are serving a victorious Christ.

D. *The Commendations (v.9)*- what a strange commendation to those who are ignorant of the Christian life (I Peter 4:12-14).

E. *The exhortation (v.10)*- *there are no complaints no condemnation*

1. be fearless
2. be faithful

F. *The Reward*

A Crown of life- the martyr's crown (James 1:12)

G. *The promise*

- Not hurt by the second death (v.11)

H. *The "ten days" persecution of the Smyrna church*

It actually happened in the period of AD 100-313

The Roman Persecutors

Nero(64-68)	Killed Peter and Paul
Domitian (81-96)	-thought that Christianity is atheistic -killed thousands of believers -punished John to Patmos
Trojan (98-117)	-first to pass laws against Christianity -burned Ignatius at the stake
Piu (137-161)	Killed Policarp, a disciple of John
Marcus Cornelius (261-180)	-thought Christianity a superstition -beheaded Justin Martyr

Severus (193-211)	Killed Origen's father
Thracian (235-238)	Brutal barbarian who commanded all Christians to die
Decius (249-251)	Determined to exterminate Christianity