

Study 10: Revelation 2 & 3

SEVEN CHURCHES – A CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The LORD Jesus Christ, who was the Victim, is now the Victor
He is the Conqueror, the Lord of Glory

Each of these churches, with all their problems, are still true churches. None of them were perfect. Even the best churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia faced serious problems.

The Seven Churches divide into two groups:

A. Five Churches against which there is CONDEMNATION

Ephesus – lost its first love
Pergamos – compromised with false doctrine
Thyatira – an undisciplined church
Sardis – a dead church
Laodicea – a lukewarm church

B. Two churches against which there is NO CONDEMNATION

Smyrna – facing the fires of persecution
Philadelphia – in the fires of revival

Analysis:

1. Ephesus: It had so much going for it. But it had lost its first love.
2. Smyrna: Faced the Devil's opposition. Ephesus had trouble from within. Smyrna had trouble from outside.
3. Pergamos: Witnessing yet worldly.
4. Thyatira: Persevering but corrupt.
5. Sardis: Spiritual torpor and stupor. Wake up!
6. Philadelphia: Faced the challenge of those who were not prepared to surrender to Christ.
7. Laodicea: Nothing to praise. The church had such a good opinion of itself, but it was barely still a church.

Seven churches: symbolic of the whole church

LESSONS:

1. Each church is addressed as an individual church – yet also as representative of the whole church. ‘Seven’ stands for completion – therefore ‘Seven Churches’ represents the one complete church. Which of these seven churches is most like our church? And to what extent am I personally responsible for this?

2. Each church member is addressed individually and personally – yet also collectively. (Note 1:3 “*Blessed is **he** who reads and **those** who hear...*”) Each letter concludes with a personal appeal to the individual. “***He** who has an ear to hear let **him** hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.*” Each letter concludes with a personal promise to the individual. “*To **him** who **overcomes**...*”

3. Each letter is addressed to the “angel of the church...” Those in leadership. How are they leading? What is the spiritual basis of their leadership? Is it in the light of God’s truth?

4. Each church is addressed as a lampstand. The church can only act as a lampstand if the light-bearers are functioning! See Matthew 5:14-16.
THE CHURCH HAS NO OTHER FUNCTION THAN TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE LIGHT.

The LORD is in the midst of the lampstands to trim the wick and to brighten the flame. Otherwise the lampstand will be removed from its place. The LORD cares and is concerned for the life and testimony of His people. This is why He chastens, rebukes, commends and condemns. The greater the darkness, the greater the need for the light to shine.
