

NEXT 02: "7 Churches"
Revelation 2-3

May 28,2023

Main Idea: The letters are as relevant to us today as they were to the original seven churches.

The Seven Churches – Then and Now

The first three chapters in the book of Revelation describe **events during the Church Age** – that is, from Pentecost (see Acts 1-2) to the Rapture of the Church (see 1Thessalonians 4:13-18). We know the seven churches actually existed in John's day, however much debate has surrounded their meaning beyond that. Note:

- **The seven churches were literal churches** in the first century and the messages were specific to them.
- **The churches represent seven characteristics that can exist in any church or believer.**
- **The churches were literal, but also symbolic of 7 types of churches** during the Church Age.
- **The churches represent 7 basic divisions in church history.**

Church Summaries

Chapters 2 and 3 contain all seven letters. The pattern is similar. Each church is encouraged regarding what they are doing faithfully and called out for their compromise. Interestingly, only the churches at **Smyrna and Philadelphia are not rebuked or corrected.**

1. **Ephesus – Wrong motivation for worship and service.**
2. **Smyrna – No complaint.**
3. **Pergamos – Tolerant of compromise and idolatry.**
4. **Thyatira – Tolerant of compromise and idolatry.**
5. **Sardis – Reputation for life, but were actually dead.**
6. **Philadelphia – No complaint.**
7. **Laodicea – Indifferent and unaware.**

Closing Verses – Read Revelation 3:20-22

Our tendency is to meticulously analyze the 7 letters, but then fail to see the simple gospel message. In the simplicity of these last three verses of ch.3, the Christian life is explained. The gospel is presented and the daily walk is illustrated. This is your invitation from Jesus Himself. He is waiting for you to respond. He came the first time in love and humility to do for us what we could not accomplish on our own. When He returns, He is coming as a Judge.

Family Night Big Idea – Read Revelation 2:1-11

The text contains the first 2 of the 7 letters (Ephesus and Smyrna). Compare and contrast the letters and the churches.

- **Preschool/ Elementary** – Ask, "Why was Jesus upset with the church at Ephesus? What had they done (v.4)? How should we react to difficulty and even suffering (vv.9-10)?"
- **Middle/ High School** – Ask, "What does 'forsaken your first love' mean (v.4)? How is it possible for us to do the same? How can we be confident and courageous when we face difficulty and even suffering?"

Prayer

"Father, we want to worship You in sincerity. We never want to drift away from your love. Amen."

Velocity (Middle and High School Students)

Velocity: Velocity goes Whitewater Rafting June 5-9.

Gravity: Students stay and enjoy the service.

Today's Songs

Running Home.....Cochran and Co.

God Really Loves Us.....Crowder

This is Our God.....Phil Wickham

Building Dino-sized Faith in God's Big Plan

Summer Camp for rising Kindergarten – 3rd graders is June 12-16 from 9am-Noon. Registration online and in the lobby begins May 14th. Cost is \$10.

Fostering Bulloch Donations

If you can donate toiletry items, please see list in the lobby and take to Hope Chest in downtown Statesboro at 102 Elm Street. Thank you!

Baby Bottle Boomerang

All Baby Bottles due Today.

Baptism

June 18th. Use the Communication Card for more information.

Summer Camp Donations

Sign up in the lobby if you can bring a needed item for Summer Camp to the church kitchen by June 4th.