

Sunday, February 25, 2024

1 Timothy 4:13, “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.”

Title: Lettes to Ephesus and Smyrna
Series: Revelation ... 3 **Text:** Revelation 2:1 - 11

Purpose: I want to PERSUADE my congregation to BELIEVE there is a personal application to each of the seven letters to the seven churches.

Introduction:

~ Last week in our devotional from Revelation 1 were considered some of the aspects of our resurrected, glorified Lord: 1) John Heard a Loud Voice, 2) John First Notices the Attire of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 3) John Then Turns His Attention to the Person of Jesus Christ

~ Each of the seven letters are an evaluation of the respective church. There also have an application to every church and every believer through every age. There also seems to be an application to church history. We could say that the applications of each letter are: local, general, personal (each believer), and prophetic!

~ Each of the letters, for the most part, follow a general outline: 1) Name of the Church: this is more than an address but is vital to the content, 2) Title of the Lord Jesus Christ that is Revealed to the Church, 3) Commendation, 4) Reproof, 5) Exhortation, 6) Promise to those who Overcome, 7) Closing

~ Revelation 1:19, “Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.”

This is the Holy Spirit’s general outline for Revelation:

- 1) “that you have seen,” Revelation 1
- 2) “those things that are,” Revelation 2 & 3
- 3) “and those that are to take place after this.” Revelation 4 – 22

1. Letter to the Church at Ephesus:

~ Name of the church (vs. 1); Ephesus, was classified by Rome as a free city with their own municipal government and senate. Name Ephesus means Desired One, a term of endearment.

~ Was the Roman capital for what was then called Asia (Asia Minor), was located on a major trade route and, at that time, had a significant harbor which had been used as a naval base.

~ Ephesus was a center of idol worship; the Temple of Artemis (Diana) is at the Ephesus site.

~ Paul’s farewell to the Elders of Ephesus, Acts 20:17 – 31 (see also 2Corinthians 11:14 - 15 and 1 Thessalonians 5:20 – 21)

~ Title of the Lord Jesus Christ (vs. 1), “The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.” See Revelation 1:13, 16 & 20

~ Commendation (vs. 2 – 3), 1) “I know your works,” they dealt with heresies; 2) “your toil,” they were a missionary center; 3) “patient endurance,” amidst the idolatry; 4) “you cannot bear those who are evil,” faith and practice must match; 5) “tested those who call themselves apostles,” identified false teachers; 6) “bearing up for my name’s sake,” experienced persecution; 7) “you have not grown weary,” have not given up on the faith.”

~ Reproof (vs. 4), “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.”

The word love is agape and the word first is protos (adjective), by context it is first in rank, influence, honor, chief, principal. They were good ‘Marthas’ but poor ‘Marys’.
Luke 10:38 – 42

~ Exhortation (vs. 5), “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at the first.”

~ Promise (vs. 7) “To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

There are 404 verses in Revelation and approximately 800 allusions to the Old Testament.

~ Close (vs. 7), “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Our application: to protect from error and false apostles we are to be students of the Bible (doctrine), but we must also cultivate personal DEVOTION to Christ Jesus!

2. Letter to the Church at Smyrna:

~ Name of church (vs. 8); Smyrna, the name means ‘myrrh’ a spice used in preparing a corpse. It is located 65 Km. north of Ephesus; it was located on key trading route and had an excellent harbor. One historian, Strabo, described Smyrna as the most beautiful city in the world; even today Ismir is referred to as the ‘Paris of Levant.’ Upgraded by Alexander the Great to be a major center. 27 B.C. comes under Roman control. It was a pagan center with a major temple to Zeus and it was the eastern center for worship to Ceasar as the high god.

~ Title of the Lord Jesus Christ (vs. 8); “The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.” Connect His title to the meaning of Smyrna! See Revelation 1:17 -18 and 2: 8! Want to guess how many times that phrase, ‘the first and the last’ appears in Scripture? These two in Revelation and Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12; Revelation 1:11 and 22:13.

~ Commendation (vs. 9 – 10): 1) “I know your tribulation,” they are declaring Christ Jesus as the Mighty God – how this ran contrary to the worship of Ceasar! 2) “and your poverty,” to openly declare Christ had sever economic consequences. 3) “and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” They stood fast and were not deceived! 4) “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison,” would not recant their faith – pinch of incense on the flame to Ceasar! 5) “that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation.” Stand in the truth! 6) “Be faithful unto death;” Faith is the opposite of fear. Revelation 21:8. 7) “and I will give the crown of life.” Crown is ‘stephanos’ not ‘diadem;’ this is the victors reward.

~ Reproof – there is none

~ Exhortation (vs. 9 – 10); do not fear and be faithful

~ Promise (vs. 11), “The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.” Revelation 20:14 – 15, “Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (15) And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

~ Close (vs. 11), “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Our application: Have we made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ; not just a verbal confession, but a personal submission to the yoke of Christ Jesus; Matthew 11:28 – 30, “Come to me, all labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Do not regarded it strange if you suffer for your faith.

Conclusion:

Prayer time!