

## I. THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS A WORSHIP AND PRAYER MANUAL TO PREPARE THE CHURCH IN THE END TIMES

- A. Revelation reveals the heart and beauty of Jesus Christ. It is secondarily a book about events in the End Times to purify the church, bring in the harvest, and to replace all the evil governments on the earth as He drives Satan off the planet. This is what the church in the last days needs most, to be fascinated with the beauty and the brilliant leadership of Jesus.

***Rev 1:1 (NKJV) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place...***

There is a blessing that is promised to those who read, hear, and keep the words of the prophesy. If you will study it and live it out, you will find great blessing in the Lord.

***Rev 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.***

## II. JESUS SPEAKS TO THE CHURCHES BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT (REV. 2-3)

- A. John receives the revelation at Patmos, a little Greek island in the Aegean Sea. It is one of the northernmost of the Dodecanese Islands, which are off the southwest coast of Turkey.
- B. The seven churches mentioned in Rev. 1-3 are in the region known as Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). Asia Minor was composed of 7 postal districts. At the center of those districts were 7 key cities which served as central points for the dissemination of information.
1. None of these cities exist now, except Smyrna, the ancient city, now known as Izmir, which is in Turkey. The church at Smyrna was experiencing severe persecution. It is the only city that has continued to the present day. Thyatira, the ancient city, lies beneath the modern day town of Akhisan.
  2. The 7 cities form the circular route for a letter carrier. The route starts at Ephesus.
- C. Ephesus was the main seaport of Asia Minor. It was a very wealthy city and was the intersection of several major trade routes. The temple of Artemis (Diana) was located there.
- D. The church at Ephesus (Acts 18-20). Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos, the Apostle John had all been leaders at the church in Ephesus. Ephesus was a true lampstand in the region (Eph 1:15-16).

## III. JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF TO THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS (v. 1)

- A. Jesus is portrayed as the one who holds the seven stars in His right hand (John 10:28). This is an encouragement to a church that has been harassed by false teachers (Ac. 20:29-31).

***John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.***

#### **IV. JESUS ENCOURAGES THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (vv. 2, 3, 6)**

- A. For about 40 years since the church's founding, they had remained faithful to the Lord.
- B. Jesus acknowledges their works and labors, their doctrinal purity and discernment, and their endurance and perseverance.
- C. The church at Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. Irenaeus, a bishop in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D., says that this false teaching started from Nicolas, who was one of the deacons named in Acts 6. He led the people into sexual immorality and wickedness. Their teaching perverted grace and replaced liberty with license to sin.

#### **V. JESUS BRINGS CORRECTION TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (vv. 4-5)**

- A. They put increasing their ministry before cultivating love for Jesus. Their works, doctrinal purity, and perseverance were not a substitute for love (Matt. 22:38; 1 Cor. 13)
- B. They are called to remember the days when they had been fervent and passionate in their pursuit of Christ. Jesus says that they had fallen away from a love relationship with Jesus.
- C. They are called to repent and to do the first works.
- D. It is possible to know and do the right things and yet have a heart that has grown cold, hardened. If they do not repent, Jesus warns of their lampstand being removed.

#### **VI. JESUS CHALLENGES THE CHURCH TO OVERCOME**

- A. We need to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Otherwise, we will be an organization, not a church of Jesus Christ. We need to be willing to hear all that God would say to us.
- B. Jesus calls us to be among those who overcome the world. The man or woman who fights against sin and the devil, out of love for Christ and perseveres to the end.
- C. To such a one is promised something better than the food offered to idols: to eat from the tree of life.
  - 1. Church members were probably tempted to join the ungodly festivals by the food offered to idols.
  - 2. God had previously barred sinful man from access to the fruit of the tree of life. In Rev. 22:2, tree of life is seen growing in the New Jerusalem, thus signifies eternal life in heaven. It will bring healing to the nations.

***Eph. 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. (NIV: with an undying love)***