

## **THE CHURCH IN TODAY'S WORLD REVELATION 2 AND 3**

Revelation 2 and 3 records the second division of Revelation. The things that now exist (1:19) are the churches of our Lord in today's world. There were other churches in Asia Minor at that time with some being larger than those described in Revelation. The Lord chose to speak to and about these churches. Therefore, we conclude that he not only had a message for those churches, but he also has a message for us from these churches. There are at least three lessons that we can learn from the seven churches of Asia. Let's consider:

### **I. THE PRACTICAL LESSON.**

#### **A. The Historical Aspect.**

1. Literal churches in a real world.
2. Picture of the church at the end of the first century.
  1. Provides an inspired description of the Lord's perception of his church.
  2. Shows that the early church was not a perfect church.

#### **B. The Perennial Aspect.**

\* The messages to the seven churches address problems that exist in churches throughout the age. \*

1. Ephesus – Dead fundamentalism.
2. Smyrna – Persecution.
3. Pergamos – Compromise and false teaching.
4. Thyatira – Corruption and unholy union.
5. Sardis – Good reputation but spiritually dead.
6. Philadelphia – Weak but faithful.
7. Laodicea – Affluent and complacent.

### **II. THE PROPHETIC LESSON.**

#### **A. The Proposal.**

\* Many teachers believe that the churches are listed in a particular order that describes the development of the church from Pentecost to the Rapture. This view seems reasonable and appropriate, but is not specifically stated in Scripture. \*

#### **B. The Outline.**

\* This outline paints a general picture with exceptions in every age. Most dates are approximate and given in round numbers. \*

1. Ephesus – AD 33 – 150 – Early church beginning to lose its passion.
2. Smyrna – AD 150 – 312 – The church persecuted by the Roman Empire.
3. Pergamos – AD 312 – 600 – The church sanctioned by the Roman Empire until the rise of the Papal System.

4. Thyatira – AD 600 – 1500 – The church of the Dark Ages under the Papal System.
5. Sardis – AD 1500-1750 – The church of the Reformation.
6. Philadelphia – AD 1750-1950 – The revival and missionary church.
7. Laodicea - AD 1950 – Rapture – The complacent church at the end of the age.

### III. THE PERSONAL LESSON.

A. The Instruction. 2:7,11,17,20; 3:6,13,22.

B. The Application.

1. Guard your heart. 2:4.
2. Be faithful in trials. 2:10.
3. Don't compromise. 2:12,20.
4. Be genuine. 3:1.
5. Be faithful until he returns. 3:11.
6. Be open to his voice. 3:20.

The risen Lord examines his church. He knows his church. What would he write to this church? How do we need to apply the messages to the churches in Revelation to our church? Our lives?