

The **REVELATION** of Jesus Christ

Sunday, February 18, 2007

CHAPTERS TWO AND THREE – SEVEN LETTERS TO SEVEN CHURCHES

INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH HISTORY – CHAPTERS 2-3

Chapter one ended with God's instruction to the apostle John to write (Rev. 1:11, 19). He was to write the things he saw – things from the past, present and future. When John was told to write, he did it from the perspective of where he was at that time – the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10). When you consider the interesting fact that heaven opens _____ times in the book of Revelation (4:1 & 19:11), combined with the instructions given to John to _____...we have God's natural outline for the book of Revelation:

- Chapters 1 - 3 - _____ History
- Chapters 4 - 19:10 - _____ period; what takes place in heaven and what takes place on earth
- Chapter 19:11 - 22 - The _____ Coming, Millennial Reign, Judgment, New Heaven, New Earth

Today we begin our study of chapters 2-3. Both chapters are connected because they give us the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor.

The seven churches of Revelation:

- Seven _____ – Revelation 1:11, 19

- Seven _____ - Rev. 1:11 & Chapters 2-3
 - 1) Ephesus - Rev. 2:1-7
 - 2) Smyrna - Rev. 2:8-11
 - 3) Pergamos - Rev. 2:12-17
 - 4) Thyatira - Rev. 2:18-29
 - 5) Sardis - Rev. 3:1-6
 - 6) Philadelphia - Rev. 3:7-13
 - 7) Laodicea - Rev. 3:14-22

What these letters represent biblically:

- Historically - Seven letters written to seven _____ churches that actually existed historically. They are all located in what was called at the time "Asia Minor", today known as modern day "_____." The letters addressed _____ needs and issues taking place in the seven churches, in approximately 91-96 AD.

- Devotionally - These seven churches represent churches _____; some churches today are just like these seven churches. At times throughout history churches have been marked by the _____ characteristics as these seven churches in Asia Minor.

- Doctrinally - They represent seven periods of _____ _____ as John seeks to fulfill his mission to _____ (Because of certain elements of their content they also have a _____ application...)
 - 1) Ephesus - Rev. 2:1-7 - 90 – 175/200 AD - _____
 - 2) Smyrna - Rev. 2:8-11 - 175/200 – 325 AD - _____
 - 3) Pergamos - Rev. 2:12-17 - 325 – 500 AD - _____
 - 4) Thyatira - Rev. 2:18-29 - 500 – 1000 AD - _____
 - 5) Sardis - Rev. 3:1-6 - 1000 – 1500 AD - _____
 - 6) Philadelphia - Rev. 3:7-13 - 1500 – 1900 AD - _____
 - 7) Laodicea - Rev. 3:14-22 - 1900 – Present time - _____

**The dates listed are approximate...*

Why would God give us a detailed description of church history?

- Consider the book of _____...

The Acts of the Apostles is not a doctrinal treatise detailing church theology. It is historical record detailing the Acts of the Apostles. The book of Acts is a _____ book.

Major transitions in Acts:

- From _____ Testament structure to _____ Testament structure

The common thought is that the gospels make this transition, however, consider when the New Testament actually started - Mt. 11:7, 13; Hebrews 9:16-17

- From _____ to _____
- From the nation of _____ to the _____
- From the kingdom of _____ to the kingdom of _____
- From _____ to _____
- From God's headquarters in the Jerusalem church to the new base of operations in the _____ church
- From Jerusalem (Acts 1-7); to Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12); to the _____ parts of the earth (Acts 13-28)

- Consider how Acts fits into the overall scheme of the New Testament...

– Acts covers _____ church history from approximately 33-60 AD; the book of Acts is the one book God uses to teach us early church history. It contains 28 chapters, yet it does _____ take us past the first century...

– Without the book of ACTS we would be totally confused concerning God's NT revelation of truth – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John...Romans???

Key Point: If Acts (the history book of the NT) was removed from the NT record, you would be utterly confused. Likewise, without a _____ understanding of church history you would be equally bewildered.

Why are there seven periods?

- God's pattern of sevens:

- Six days of creation, seventh day of rest
- Seventh man from Adam was Enoch...
- Clean beasts were taken into Noah's Ark by seven's
- Six days in Jewish workweek, seventh day of rest
- Seven spirits of God
- Seven dispensations of human history
- Seven feasts of Israel
- Seven NT Mysteries given to the church
- Seven NT Mysteries given to Israel
- Seven Deacons chosen in Acts 6
- Seven baptisms
- Seven resurrections
- Seven raptures
- NT epistles written to seven churches
- Seven miracles in the gospel of John
- Seven appearances of angels in gospels
- Seven characteristics of wisdom in James 3:17
- The Word of God was purified seven times...
- The sevens of Revelation (see message 1, page 2)
- Seven millenniums to complete human history
- Etc., etc., etc. (Continue to follow the number seven throughout scripture)

- The number seven is obviously a special number in the Bible:

- Because human history breaks down into _____ dispensations...
- Because these dispensations take place over a period of _____ millennium...
- Because our God is a God of _____...It only makes sense that God's pattern of _____ will be followed as it concerns Church History!