

I. THE SEVEN CHURCHES

A. Introduction to Chapters 2&3

1. There were three divisions provided in REV. 1:19 – “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;”
  - a. John wrote on the things he had seen in the Gospel of John
  - b. And in fact, Revelation Chapter 1 occurred in the past
2. But he must also write the things “which are”
  - a. Could confuse since none of these Seven Churches exist today
  - b. Baptists believe in the Bible concept that churches start churches
  - c. And yet these things “are” still critically applicable today
3. He has a message for each of these Seven Churches
  - a. REV. 2:1, 2:8, 2:12, 2:18, 3:1, 3:7, and 3:14
  - b. Must remember: He has the RIGHT to tell churches what to do!
  - c. Quote (not exactly): “Churches don’t decide what the Bible says, the Bible declares what Churches must preach!”

B. Two Visions

1. Chapter 1:9-16 John saw Jesus in the midst of the 7 Golden Candlesticks
  - a. One like the Son of Man, clothed down to His foot, golden girdle, feet like fine brass, voice with the sound of many waters, right hand with seven stars, sharp two-edged sword in His mouth, countenance as the sun shineth in his strength!
  - b. The FIRST and the LAST – God HIMSELF!
  - c. Do we treat the Son of God too lightly / flippantly?
2. Chapter 4 John saw the 24 Elders around the throne
  - a. Come up hither! REV. 4:1-4
  - b. NOTE: There was a DOOR opened – REV. 4:1
  - c. JOHN 10:9 – “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

C. These chapters exist between these two visions

1. Between Jesus on Earth – Think of the ministry of Jesus on Earth
  - a. HEB. 2:9 – “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”
  - b. That word “made” means became – He allowed Himself
2. And Jesus on the Throne!
  - a. REV. 4:3 – He that sat looked like a jasper and a sardine stone
  - b. Highly polished – a watery crystalline brightness – DAZZLING!
  - c. It is a glimpse into eternity (seven years of Tribulation not large)

3. The present age of New Testament Churches
  - a. Sandwiched between the Cross and the Coming Lord
  - b. The things which “are” STILL are

## II. THE SAMPLE CHURCHES

- A. Conditions in each church representative of churches everywhere
  1. Warm and On Fire – Like Ephesus
  2. Under Persecution – Like Smyrna
  3. Compromising – Like Pergamos
  4. Social – Like Thyatira
  5. Dying – Like Sardis
  6. Missionary – Like Philadelphia
  7. Lukewarm – Like Laodicea
- B. We must be brutally honest and examine our own Church
  1. But we must remember, our church is NOT someone else
  2. 1 COR. 12:27 – “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”
  3. It falls upon EACH ONE OF US as members in particular
    - a. To be Warm and on Fire like Ephesus
    - b. Or to be Lukewarm like Laodicea
    - c. Or to be dying like Sardis
- C. These churches do not typify “ages” throughout the last 2000 years
  1. First, it is hard to strip away the universal idea from that concept
  2. Second, is the Church of England a true church to include it in the “social” age? Is Catholicism biblical to call it “compromising”?
  3. Or, have true N.T. churches under many names always been there!
  4. MATT. 16:18 – “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

## III. THE SAVIOR’S CHURCHES

- A. He was in the midst of them – 7 Candlesticks not 1
  1. Churches of Asia – Not Church
    - a. He CARES for them
    - b. He COMMENDS them
    - c. He CRITICISES them
  2. These churches do not exist today – BUT OTHERS DO!
  3. It is God’s purpose for all churches to mature and reproduce
    - a. Pray for laborers unto the harvest
    - b. Pray for an opportunity to start another church!
- B. He is the HEAD of each church

1. EPH. 5:23 – “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
2. Each church is His Blood Bought Body
  - a. ACTS 20:28 – “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
  - b. 1 COR. 12:20 – “But now are they many members, yet but one body.”
3. The Pastor isn’t the head (he is just the messenger)
  - a. The pastor SHOULD be in Christ’s Hand – a place of protection
  - b. And pastors need prayer!

#### **IV. THE SENT CHURCHES**

- A. He has the keys of hell and of death – REV. 1:18
  1. And He commissioned US as a Church to go and tell the Gospel
  2. ACTS 1:8 – “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
  3. JOHN 14:6 – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
  4. He is the LIFE, and He has the keys of Hell and of Death
  5. AND HE SENT US!
- B. We make MUCH of Missions here
  1. READ the letters and pray for our missionaries
  2. Take a card, put it in a box and pray for one every day!
  3. And never let a chance go by, tell others about JESUS (not our church)
- C. A baptized body of believers organized to fulfill the Great Commission
  1. Baptized – the first step of obedience is SCRIPTURAL baptism
  2. Body – this group not some mystical “other” somewhere (responsible)
  3. Believers – only the SAVED may truly join a church

#### **V. ONLY SAVED CHILDREN**

- A. Only those truly Saved by the Blood of Jesus Christ may become members
  1. That means someone who has repented and trusted fully in Him
  2. That word “repent” simply means a change of mind and direction
  3. That word “believe” means fully trust
  4. Fly over Grand Canyon in a plane or try to Jump?
    - a. Trust my own way and my own power?
    - b. Or put faith in an airplane?
    - c. It isn’t repentance and faith until I turn and get on board!

- B. Those who are Saved should join a Gospel-preaching Church
  - 1. By Scriptural baptism – that is the only doorway to church membership
  - 2. Even when joining by a letter, it is upon baptism at another church
  - 3. If you are not Saved this morning, then church truth is purely academic
- C. If you long to be Saved, to know that you are in His care
  - 1. Adopted into the family of God
  - 2. To know your sins are forgiven and you have a home in heaven
  - 3. Then this Bible is the only way (not church membership or baptism)
  - 4. Be Saved today!