



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 032: Letters to 7 Churches 1 – Ephesus

Study Author: Michael Button

Read Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction. Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation contain letters dictated to John by the risen Lord Jesus Christ addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). They were written in the order their bearer would travel (clockwise). Though they were the Lord's messages to churches of 1st Century Asia they are equally His messages to 21st Century churches worldwide. The first one was to the church in Ephesus.

It might help to understand the situation in which the church was placed, by reading about 1st Century Ephesus in a Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia.

1. Address (v1). This pattern follows at the beginning of each of the letters. It is uncertain why the Lord addresses the "angel" of the church (scholars differ), but see verses 16-20 of the previous chapter, which explain why in 2:1 He describes Himself as He does. What is the Lord claiming here in terms of His relationship with the church?

2. What The Lord Knows of the Church (verses 2-3 & 6). Notice commendation comes before criticism. Is this a lesson for us in our dealings with others? Note what they were commended for. Find out what the "Nicolaitans" might have been. What might be a modern equivalent?

3. The Lord's Concern for the Church (v4). He mentions only one concern – but it's a big one! (See Mark 12:20). What is it? How do you think this came about and how was it manifested (see v5 for one example).

4. Instruction and Warning (v5). Remember – Repent – Removal. What does "remove your lampstand" mean?

5. Promise (v7). Adam and Eve were prevented from eating from "The Tree of Life" (Gen 3:22). What is this tree (what do the commentaries say?) and what condition must the Ephesians fulfil to be allowed to eat from it?

To think about: Read the Lord's commendations and concern again. Where do you stand on each of these issues?

To dig deeper: What more can you find out about the "seven stars", "seven lampstands", "Tree of Life" and eating from this tree?