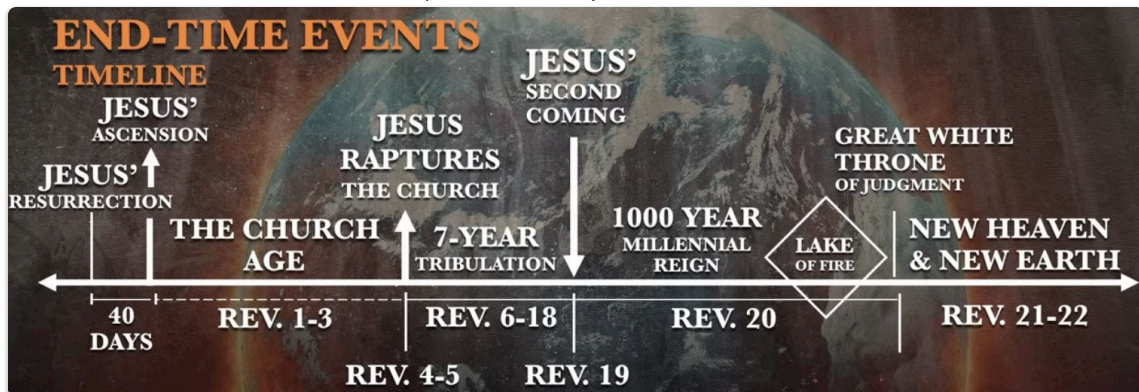


Introduction to Chapter 2

- We shift from what was seen, to what is per John's vision



- Reminder of where we are on the eschatology timeline -- Rev 2-3 Focus on the Church Age
- Things to Know about the 7 churches:
 1. The are real Churches - with real people
 - Map of the churches - circular pattern clockwise



2. With real spiritual issues relevant to us today - and relevant to their time. Each letter was given to all churches. Even you and me...
3. Prophetic - and to go deeper many believe that each church represents a different time period up and including the condition of the church today. Yes this may be conjecture and speculative, but as we learn about the churches, if they were in any other order I would agree that this wouldn't be prophetic, but up for you to decide on your own.

- Ephesus 33-100
 - 33ad - basically Pentecost -- church formed -- Acts 2 - Jesus Ascended, Holy Spirit Descended and the church was formed
 - 100ad - the last apostle died (John) -- end of the Apostolic Age
- We will talk about what ages are represented for each as we go, but a quick take is that every church represents a different period of the church from the past and into the future. For example...
- Sardis 1517 -- what happened in 1517?
 - The Reformation movement started by Martin Luther when he nailed this 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg church in Germany -- stating all the misguided theology that the Catholic church was following. At which time he separated from the Catholic church.
 - Martin Luther loved the church and didn't want to separate from it, but could not stand for false teaching. The same or similar false teaching we see in the previous church age of Thyatira (Roman Catholic Church)
 - Nonetheless, the reformation was the start of the Protestant church
- But note the last two -- Philadelphia and Laodicea still exist today and relevant to us
- What happened around 1750?
 - Great Awakening - focus on personal religious experience, characterized by figures like Jonathan Edwards
 - Evangelical Church was born.
- 1900 represents the timeline where we see a major shift in the modern church.
 - The church was split into two areas: 1) evangelical church 2) liberal church (promoting liberal theology departing from the core beliefs of the bible)
 - still exists today
- When we look at these two churches - the church of Philadelphia is known as the faithful church and will be raptured (3:10); but the church of Laodicea will go through the tribulation.
 - The church that is full of liberal theology, that compromises their beliefs, that discounts Jesus and does not know Him in a personal way. The will go through the tribulation ..
 - People who think they will be saved, but will not.



All of the letters have similarities:

- all give Jesus a special title (remember Jesus' words)
- all addressed to the angel/pastor
- all call out Jesus knowing their "works" - practical things they are doing
- all contain either a commendation, a compliant, or both
- all close with an allusion to Jesus' 2nd coming
- all close with a special promise or reward
- all close with the same challenge -- "He who has an ear, let him hear..." -- Listen to what I am saying more than the words!

Many of these exist in the wild, but helpful to understand the summary of each church and how they are the same and how they are different.

"7-Churches-of-Revelation-Chart.pdf" could not be found.

But today is about the first church in the sequence...

Ephesus

Key Elements:

- Attribute of Christ: Him who holds the 7 stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the 7 golden lampstands
- Commend: Hardworking, persevering, discerning of false teaching

- Rebuke: Left their first love
 - Reward: To eat from the tree of life
-

Revelation 2:1

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands."

Ephesus meaning Darling

Promise that He walks among us...

Background:

- 500k people at the time - most populated city in the Roman Empire -- called the Queen of Asia
 - Very prosperous -- center of trading hub - active port
 - But know for great immorality - temple of Diana (Artemis) - 1 of the 7 ancient wonders of the world -- goddess of sex and fertility ~1000 temple prostitutes employed
 - Paul spent more time here ~3 years total (Acts 19-20)
 - A revival was happening when Paul was there ... (very different place at the time of the writing)
 - 7 million dollars worth of sorcery and witchcraft type books were burnt during that time in Acts
 - This is only 30 years later from Paul being there...but 30 years later a lot can change -- they are called out for leaving their first love - Jesus (will never leave us, but we can leave Him).
 - Jesus is taking it personally, they left Him.
 - Paul's 2nd journey took him from Ephesus to Corinth
 - Read 1 Cor 1:12 - Sometimes churches become focused on their leader/pastor, more focused on church business -- then Christ.
 - *What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."*
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Revelation 2:2-4 Commendation

"2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first."

How many commendations did Jesus give Ephesus? 7

Commends them for even though they have left Him. He is trying to remind them what went well and what got them there. But then in verse 4 calls out their rebuke.

v4 is the core of the letter -- first love -- protos - first in rank, in influence -- too busy doing work for God that they aren't loving God - God would prefer Devotion over Doctrine.

Revelation 2:5-6 Rebuke

"Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. 6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

Giving them the opportunity to repent and get back on the straight and narrow.

Warning, your lampstand can be removed. Does this mean that we can lose our salvation? Jesus will never leave us, but we can leave Him.

Where is the lampstand today for Ephesus? Been removed... Today, it is 6 miles from the sea, once a key city and port is desolated.

v6 Jesus is giving Ephesus a disciplinarian sandwich: he commends them for their hard work and perseverance, calls out their leaving Him and commends them for their hate of false teaching.

Nicolaitans - Nikeo - conquer / overcome and rule / laos meaning leity -- conquering the leity -- man made system where access to God is through a middle man. Jesus hates this. No human can mediate between God and Man.

Revelation 2:7 Reward

"Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

First reference to the Tree of Life since Genesis 2 ... will hear about it again in Rev 22. This is what was meant for us from the very beginning and this is the promise that it will all be restored --- to the ones who are victorious!

The closing question, are you still in love with Jesus? Let's talk about it...

Next Week - Smyrna