

REVELATION UNVEILED: CHAPTERS 2 & 3; THE CHURCHES

THE APOCALYPSE OF JESUS REVEALS HOW THE CHURCH STRUGGLES TO REMAIN FAITHFUL WHILE ROME PERSECUTES IT. IN THE LORD'S CRITICISM OF HIS CHURCH, TOO MUCH OF ROME HAS INFILTRATED THE CHURCH, AND TOO LITTLE OF THE CHURCH HAS INFLUENCED ROME. IT IS A REVELATION OF HOPE AND COMFORT, BUT ONLY FOR THOSE WILLING TO REPENT AND FOLLOW JESUS. REPENTANCE AND OBEDIENCE ARE NECESSARY TO STAY VITAL IN GOD'S KINGDOM AND TO RECEIVE ALL THE PROMISES BELONGING TO GOD'S KINGDOM.

REVELATION 2 & 3 CONSIST OF LETTERS FROM JESUS TO SEVEN 1ST-CENTURY CHURCHES. EACH OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES FROM SEVEN CITIES IN ASIA MINOR IS GIVEN A MESSAGE OF COMMENDATION, CRITICISM, WARNING, AND PROMISE. WE WILL FOCUS ON THE MESSAGES THEMSELVES AS THEY ARE FOR EVERY CHURCH IN EVERY AGE. THE MESSAGE FROM GOD TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD IS TWOFOLD. FIRST, CORRUPTION IS INFILTRATING THE CHURCH AND NEEDS TO BE ERADICATED. SECONDLY, GOD'S PEOPLE NEED TO BE STRENGTHENED AND ENCOURAGED BY THE REVELATION OF THE WAR BEING WAGED BETWEEN SATAN AND THE LAMB. KNOWING WHAT GOD IS DOING ON OUR BEHALF WILL NOURISH US TO HOLD FAST THROUGH TURBULENT TIMES AHEAD. GOD IS NOT ONLY CONCERNED WITH THE INFLUENCE OF BABYLON (EVIL EMPIRE) ON THE WORLD STAGE BUT WITH BABYLON INFILTRATING THE CHURCH, AS WELL. TO PREPARE US FOR WHAT LIES AHEAD, JESUS HAS SOME HARSH WORDS THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN TO HEART.

We will work as a group to chart the messages to the church.

1. Consider the fact that Jesus holds the stars (angels of the churches) in His hands and walks among the lampstands (churches). Why is this comforting?
2. Reflect on "anyone who has ears to hear." What does it mean to you?
3. What are the ramifications for the churches to receive a letter from God?
4. From the commendations, criticisms, warnings, etc, how does Jesus expect us to prepare for life under an evil and corrupt Empire?
5. What does Jesus expect of the church as dissidents?