

June 18-24



letters to the Church

~ REVELATION ~

Introduction

What would Jesus think if he visited First Christian Church? What is he looking for? What does Jesus want to see in a local church? Thankfully, we are not left to wonder. In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John records seven letters from Jesus to seven first-century local churches in the western part of modern-day Turkey. Jesus has a message for each church struggling with persecution and the temptation to compromise their faith. Though 2,000 years and 6,000 miles separate us from them, we still face similar challenges. As we visit these churches, we will see ourselves and our church more clearly.

Open (Get comfortable talking with each other)

- 1) When was the last time that you received a personal letter that was meaningful to you?
- 2) What was something from Sunday's sermon that stuck with you?

Discover (Open the Bible to see how truth meets life.)

- 1) What comes to mind when you think of the word apocalypse? How does your mental picture change after learning that the meaning of apocalypse is to "uncover or reveal"?
- 2) In the first two verses of Revelation, John highlights the sources that brought this message to him so that he could share it with readers of the letter. What is the significance of John providing this record?
- 3) Why does John write to "the seven churches that are in Asia" in Revelation 1:4? Is there a significance to the greeting that John uses in addressing the seven churches in Asia, "Grace to you and peace"?

Consider Paul's circular letters as you read: Colossians 1:1-2, Ephesians 1:1-2, Philemon 1:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, Galatians 1:1-3, 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, Philippians 1:1-2, Romans 1: 1-7).

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Discover Continued (Open the Bible to see how truth meets life.)

- 4) Revelation demands an understanding of the Old Testament. What Old Testament passage is John referencing in Revelation 1:7 (Isaiah 19:1, Daniel 7:13, Zechariah 12:10)? What are each of these passages referencing? Why do you think that?

- 5) In Revelation 1:4-5, John describes Jesus using eight different titles or attributes. Read through these verses to identify all eight.

How are each of these significant to this passage's purpose?

Close (Take a look at the person in the mirror and decide to make a change.)

Tim Defor has challenged us as the church to read Revelation chapters 1-3. While reading, remember the following:

- 1) Revelation is meant to be read and heard.
- 2) Revelation is to be understood.
- 3) Revelation is meant to be applied.

"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near." Revelation 1:3