

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

2. The Church in Ephesus



Introduction

We began our series on the 'Letters to the Churches' and discovered that one of the themes running through them is that of overcoming. Those who overcome will be ready when Jesus returns for His bride. As we study the 7 letters Jesus gave to the churches we will learn how we can overcome and be ready for His coming.

Scripture Reading: Revelation 2:1-7

The Apostle Paul founded the church in Ephesus about 36 years earlier when he visited the city on one of his missionary journeys. Ephesus was one of the capital cities of the Roman Empire and well known for its' temples, particularly the Temple of Diana, which housed a 60 foot high statue of the goddess. As Paul preached the gospel there, God began to move in mighty power.



What was the church in Ephesus like in the beginning when it was established by Paul?
Acts 19:1, 8-12, 17-20



In each of the letters Jesus gave a commendation to the different churches. What were the things he commended the church in Ephesus for? Revelation 2:2-3, 6



If there was a letter to your church, or the group you are in, what commendations do you think Jesus might give?

Often we only want to hear the good things. But as we read through these letters we see that in 6 of them Jesus also had a word of correction.



What was the word of correction given to the church in Ephesus? v4



Most people think of correction as 'unloving', but the Bible says 'God is love'. How do you reconcile these two seeing contradictions? Hebrews 12:5-11

(God's love is perfect and holy. He desires the very best for His children. Correction and discipline brings change to our lives, so we can share in His holiness and we will be ready when Jesus returns.)



What comes to your mind when you hear the words 'you have forsaken your first love'? In what ways do you feel you have lost your 'first love'?



Jesus shows us clearly the only way to return to our 'first love'. What are the 2 important things we need to do according to v5?

Conclusion

Although this letter was written specifically to the church in Ephesus its' message applies to God's people in all ages. Jesus clearly says in v7: "He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." In each of these letters we see the wonderful promises for those who overcome. Look at the end of v7: "To him who overcomes I will give the right to eat from the tree of life." We need to overcome the tendency to settle into a mediocre Christianity, and constantly rekindle our first love.



Divide into twos and pray for one another.