



When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

Revelation 1:17 (NLT)

I. AN OVERVIEW OF THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

1. Possible applications of the letters:

- Address the challenges of the churches of that time
- Encourage Christians from any era
- Predict seven stages of church history
 - AD 30 to 100—Apostolic church - Ephesus
 - AD 100 to 313—Persecuted church - Smyrna
 - AD 313 to 590—State Church - Pergamum
 - AD 590 to 1517—Papal Church – Thyatira
 - AD 1517 to 1730—Reformed Church - Sardis
 - AD 1730 to 1900—Missionary Church - Philadelphia
 - AD 1900 to Present—Apostate Church - Laodicea

2. Formula of the letters:

- Sent to the messenger of the church
- Description of the Risen Christ
- Summary of the condition of the church
- Guidance from Jesus to the church
- Promise of reward to the faithful

II. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS – 2:1-7

1. The Lord’s care for this church

2. The Lord’s compliment of this church (v.2-3,6)

They were:

- Diligent in their ministry (v.2a)
- Discerning regarding false teachers (v.2b)
- Determined to never give up (v.3)
- Decisive regarding the Nicolaitans (v.6)

3. The Lord's complaint against this church

How do I know if I have left my "first love"?

- I talk about spiritual growth in past tense
- I find it easy to skip times of personal study and prayer
- I have a hard time loving others
- I am unable to forgive someone who offended me
- I am complacent about sin in my life and around me
- I love something of the world more than I love God

4. The Lord's counsel to this church

- Remember where I was before I met Jesus
- Redo what I was doing when I loved Him
 - ⇒ Pray for the Lord's help
 - ⇒ Live in the Word
 - ⇒ Worship with the church
 - ⇒ Serve others
 - ⇒ Be grateful
 - ⇒ Practice forgiveness
- Repent of my sin and change my direction
- Recognize the consequences of spiritual apathy
- Realize the rewards of faithfulness

