

What Church are We?

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When you look at the second and third chapters in the book of Revelation, we see the letters to the seven churches. In these letters, Jesus identifies Himself, brings commendations to them as well as condemnations, and a call to repent. He also states a reward for the faithful and a punishment to the erring.

We recognize that “churches” are not the brick and mortar buildings. There is but one church and that is the one belonging to Christ. There are different congregations or groups of God’s people spread out, but it is still one church. These congregations are again not the building, but the people. If Jesus was writing a letter to the church here at Rock, what would it say? Would we be a group like Smyrna or a group like Laodicea?

Ephesus has great commendations by Jesus. They work, endure, test and prove out those who teach falsely, they hate the work of those against the Lord, they forbear trials, and they are not weary. This sounds like an ideal group, but there is a heart condition here. They’ve left their first love. They are active workers, but something has changed their heart. Their zeal is not what it once was.

Smyrna is described as a group that is suffering for the cause of Christ. They are oppressed, and going to experience even more trials. Smyrna is admonished not to fear and stay faithful, but we have no indication of where they err. This is a group that through heavy storms, stays committed to the work.

Pergamum is geologically in an area that would be difficult for a church to thrive. Yet they are true to Jesus’ name and one has even died for the Lord. They have allowed opinions and false doctrine into their midst and Jesus warns them to get rid of it.

Thyatira is a place of great works. They love, are faithful, give service, patient, and are growing! They are also a group that has a sect inside themselves. Several tolerate a severe false teacher and sinful person. They have not separated themselves from this person. There are those in the group though that do not hold to her teaching and so we

see there are two groups inside this church. Church discipline is not being practiced here, and some are being led away because of her influence.

Sardis is a church in trouble. There are a few that are still clean before the Lord. Sardis is a church with a good name. It has a great reputation of being alive, faithful, working, when in reality it is dead. How can that be? Many times, people can appear to be faithful and alive and workers, when in reality they are not growing, and they are not serving God properly.

Philadelphia is a group that faces adversity but has not denied the Lord. They are faithful and committed to Him knowing, as Jesus talks about here, that in the Day of Judgment they will receive blessings for they are loved.

Laodicea is a church with no commendations. Jesus mentions that they are lukewarm. They are simply there. If there was a definition of pew-potato Christians, in the Bible times, here it is. They are not active, they do not give God the glory (I am rich, I need nothing). Jesus says He would spit them out of His mouth. This is a harsh statement about this group.

Thought to Consider

I think at times we can say we've personally fallen into many of these groups. Let's be mindful of the punishment for the unfaithful as we live. What can be said us here at Rock? —**CW**