

Remnant Life Church
February 15, 2026
The Seven Churches of Revelation
Introduction
Revelation 1:9-20

Over the next several weeks leading us into Good Friday and the celebration of Resurrection Sunday, I would like for us to take a look together at the seven churches John wrote to as recorded in **Revelation 2** and **3**

- The reason I want us to do this...
 - The attacks against the things of God are on the increase
 - Attacks in houses of worship with people being killed and injured have continued to climb
 - And now there are interruptions during services with people storming the sanctuary such as what happened in Minneapolis just a few weeks ago
 - Church doctrine is more and more being called hate-speech, bigotry, and even evil
 - And churches that used to hold to the teaching of Jesus and the guidance of the Word of God are nearly unrecognizable as more and more of them are embracing the world's definition of right and wrong.
 - What do we do? Can anything be done?

The seven messages recorded in Revelation, written to some of the earliest established churches are today, and have been for centuries, an important guide for the church within the culture of the day.

- The issues these letters address are those that have been present since the followers of Jesus first began calling themselves Christians in Antioch (**Acts 11:26**)
 1. And it forces us to ask a very important question: What is the place and the role of the church in the world?
- But to answer that question means we first must know what our identity is
 1. The church is many things but who we are in relationship to the world, simply stated is...
 - We are aliens in a foreign, hostile land
 2. **I Peter 2:11** - *Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.*
 - Peter's two letters are addressed to the believers living in and scattered throughout Asia Minor
 - In fact, it is very likely that many of those in the seven churches would have read Peter's writings before receiving John's
 - Peter addresses them as 'strangers' in verse 1 and then foreigners and exiles in the 11th verse
 - If these individuals were considered as aliens and strangers, so too, their churches would obviously have been viewed in the same way
 - The world, the government, and the culture of that day was hostile toward the teachings of Christ and therefore His followers

3. Is it really that much different today?
 - In the final chapter of the book of Hebrews the author reminds the people that they are not of that land
 - **Heb 13:14** - *For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*
 - The author is telling the reader something that is still true today
 - We are not citizens of a world that is controlled and under the direct influence of satan
 - We are citizens of a land, a Kingdom, that is yet to come
 - But we still have a responsibility as God's representatives on earth

READ – Revelation 1:9-20

- The church of the 21st century in America is under attack and a war between the culture of the world and the doctrine of the church is underway
 1. And from what I can see, we are not doing very well in this battle
 - More and more churches are turning their backs on the Word of God in order to appease and be embraced by the culture of the day
 - More and more churches are not teaching the fullness of God's word, the need for repentance, the need to turn from embracing sin, and are instead focused more on making people feel good about themselves
 - Because after all, as the ads on TV tell us, He gets us
 - He does get us! But He will not ever remove the truth of His Word and His law so that we can all feel good about ourselves with no accountability to live our lives according to the standards of biblical truth
 2. Another reason we are losing this battle on so many fronts is because for the past 250 years the church of American has enjoyed unprecedented freedom
 - But this is not the case for churches around the world
 - Communism was founded on, among other things, atheistic principles
 - It was Karl Marx who was quoted as saying, "*Religion is the opiate of the people.*"
 - IOW, religion's only value is to dull the senses of people so they will not know how terrible their lives really are.
 - In Communist countries, all religion is outlawed
 - There are currently 13 countries around the world that are categorized as extreme in their persecution of Christianity
 - In all of them open worship of the One True God is strictly forbidden
 - They all aggressively persecute Christians and most carry a death penalty for various religious infractions.
 - Among the most dangerous places for Christians is North Korea, Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Iran and India
 - In addition, there are 38 more countries classified as very high in their aggressive persecution of Christians

- And the churches that do survive in those countries are all meeting underground and in fearful secrecy
 - Their pastors and leaders, if found out, are in most cases immediately executed
- 3. What the churches in those countries are forced to do only serves to emphasize the fact that the protestant church in this country is woefully unprepared to face the increasing anti-Christian, anti-Bible and anti-Jesus movement that is continuing to grow
 - How do I know this?
 - Because more and more are abandoning the truth of God's Word in order to be acceptable in the eyes of the world
 - But what must be understood is that is not possible!
 - You either serve God or you serve satan – but it cannot be both
 - **Math 6:24** - *No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other.*
- 4. The first-century church, however, during the time of John and the other disciples, was familiar with all of what we are experiencing in this country today.
 - And there were multiple elements behind the persecution:
 - They were persecuted politically - Despised because the Romans viewed them as disloyal because they refused to acknowledge Caesar as a divine authority.
 - They were persecuted religiously - Accused of being heretics because they did not worship the vast array of Roman gods but instead insisted on worshipping an invisible God, not an idol.
 - They were persecuted socially - They were by and large from the lower classes of society
 - Paul writes in **1 Cor. 1:26** - *Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.*
 - Christians were societal outcasts and loathed by the Roman aristocracy.
 - And finally, they were persecuted economically—They were seen as a threat by the pagan priests, craftsmen, and merchants who profited from the making and selling of idols.
 - They were surrounded by dark paganism, uninhibited immorality, withering slavery, and oppressive dictators.
 - The early Christians were truly enemies of the world and because they were, it led to martyrdom for many of them.
 - Remember, every disciple of Jesus Christ, with the exception of John, were martyred and most in very horrific ways
 - And it began with Stephen in **Acts 7**, the first recorded martyr for his faith in Jesus Christ

- Let's take a moment to understand what is happening in the time of John when these letters were written
 1. For John personally, he has been banished by the Roman emperor Domitian to the island of Patmos
 2. A small Greek island located 40 miles off the western coast of modern-day Turkey in the Aegean Sea
 3. Why is he there?
 - Primarily because the emperor Domitian as well as Augustus – who was Caesar at the time of Jesus' birth - were the first emperors who demanded the people address them as our lord and god
 - John, of course, refused to do this
 - Many of the first martyrs of the church were those who would not say Caesar is Lord but only Jesus is Lord
 - And so even as these letters are being written, the author is himself being persecuted for his beliefs
 - And because of that persecution, many of the young churches in John's day, were confused, filled with questions and themselves under attack
 4. Of the seven churches that John was told to write to, only 2 were serving, surviving, and demonstrating their commitment to living for Jesus Christ
 5. The churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia present a positive template for the church of the 21st century
 - True godliness - Sound doctrine - Solid leadership with character - Christ-centered worship - Commitment to faith-filled prayer – and a Hunger for holiness

- Now I realize that this could be presenting a very bleak picture but what is at the core of each of these messages to the seven churches?
 1. Hope
 - Yes, it was also a warning but it was without question a message of edification and encouragement
 - With the exception of the church in Sardis, the Lord says He knows the good that the churches were doing but they needed to strengthen their resolve, they needed to tighten their commitment
 - And to do that in spite of their circumstances and surroundings
 2. Well, that same message is needed for the churches of this country today, including right here at Remnant Life

- Now perhaps you believe that John and those early churches were not at the level of persecution that we are today
 1. Well in reality, there was actually no one of that time, who had more reason to be discouraged, depressed and feeling the burden of hopelessness than John
 - Just 20 or so years earlier, Jerusalem was invaded, conquered and turned, literally, into a wasteland
 - All of those he had been closest to, the other disciples were dead including his brother – martyred for spreading the news of Jesus Christ's resurrection

- And there were others, close to John, who had also lost their lives
 - And while others in the Bible have made the same claim, John was truly all alone
 - The capital city of Jerusalem was in ruins with more than 100,000 slain at the hands of the Roman army under General Titus' command
 - The great temple had been torn down and burned to the ground just as Jesus had prophesied it would be
 - The Roman army, not satisfied with merely the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, proceeded then to march through Israel destroying over 900 cities
 - Mass genocide of the Jewish people was still, while John was writing, in progress
- We desperately need the Lord in the midst of our churches today
 1. The messages to the seven churches in Asia Minor present a clear warning dealing with every type of temptation and every pitfall that the church must be on guard against
 2. Because in spite of what our culture wants you to believe, the church is not dead
 3. But I believe it is in desperate need of a transfusion
 - Out with the dead blood of the world
 - To be replaced with the living blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

In 1899 a hymn was written that has been sung in churches around the world for the past 227 years

- It was written by Lewis Edgar Jones, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago who was a classmate of the great evangelist Billy Sunday.
- It was written just a little over 170 miles southwest of here in Mountain Lake Park, MD during a camp meeting
- He has been credited with writing over 270 texts and hymns but listen to the first verse and chorus of perhaps his most well-known...

*Would you be free from your burden of sin? There's power in the blood, power in the blood.
 Would you o'er evil and victory win? There's wonderful power in the blood
 There is power, power, wonder-working power, in the blood, of the Lamb
 There is power, power, wonder-working power, in the precious blood of the Lamb.*

The churches of Revelation and the church of today need the wonder-working power of the precious blood of the Lamb

Over the next several weeks we are going to take what John wrote and use it to examine ourselves so that each of us, and this church, can continue the fight to be free from the burden of sin.

While still loving a world that will be fighting us every step of the way.