

Hurstbourne Baptist Church; September 20, 2020
Sermon Notes: Revelation 2:1-7
“To the Church in Ephesus”

The Seven Letters of Revelation 2-3

1. Each Letter is Addressed to the Angel of a Church (2:1, 2:8, 2:12, 2:18, 3:1, 3:7, 3:14).
2. Each Letter is Addressed from Jesus as the Glorious Son of Man (2:1, 2:8, 2:12, 2:18, 3:1, 3:7, 3:14).
3. Each Letter Contains A Commendation (2:2-3, 2:9, 2:13, 2:19, 3:4, 3:8-10).
4. Each Letter Contains A Criticism (2:4, 2:14-15, 2:20-23, 3:1-2, 3:15-17).
5. Each Letter Contains A Call for Correction (2:5, 2:16, 2:21-23, 3:2-3, 3:18-19).
6. Each Letter Contains A Call to Hear (2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22).
7. Each Letter Contains A Promise of Blessing (2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26-28, 3:5, 3:11-12, 3:21).

The First Letter: Revelations 2:1-7

1. Addressed to the Angel of the Church in Ephesus (2:1)
 - a. See the sermon notes for key verses and commentary on angels (available online).
2. Addressed from Jesus (2:1)
 - a. Jesus is the one “who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands” (2:1). Jesus is “vitaly present” with the church in Ephesus. He knows them intimately. He is with them in their distress.
3. A Word of Commendation (2:2-3, 6)
 - a. The Ephesian Christians worked **hard**.
 - b. The Ephesian Christians worked **long**.
 - c. The Ephesian Christians were doctrinally **vigilant**.
 - d. The Ephesian Christians **hated** evil.
4. A Word of Criticism (2:4)
 - a. The Ephesian Christians had **abandoned** their first love.
5. A Call for Correction (2:5)
 - a. The Ephesian Christians were called to **repent**, which means **turn** or **change**.
6. A Call to Hear (2:7)
 - a. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
7. A Promise of Blessing (2:7)
 - a. “To the one who **conquers**, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

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Additional Notes on the Angels in Revelation 1-3

Key Question

- Who are the “stars” and “angels” in Revelation 1-3?

Key Verses

- Revelation 1:16, “In his right hand he held seven **stars**.”
- Revelation 1:20, “The seven **stars** are the **angels** of the seven churches.”
- Revelation 2:1, “To the **angel** of the church in Ephesus”
- Revelation 2:8, “To the **angel** of the church in Smyrna”
- Revelation 2:12, “To the **angel** of the church in Pergamum”
- Revelation 2:18, “To the **angel** of the church in Thyatira”
- Revelation 3:1, “To the **angel** of the church in Sardis”
- Revelation 3:7, “To the **angel** of the church in Philadelphia”
- Revelation 3:14, “To the **angel** of the church in Laodicea”

Key Commentary

- The angels are not pastors. “Nowhere in the New Testament are pastors referred to as angels. And everywhere else in Revelation, angels are heavenly creatures. So he probably refers here to heavenly creatures who are representatives of the churches. The churches have a heavenly existence” (Schreiner, “Losing Our First Love,” 3:40).
- The angels are commanded by Jesus, the glorious Son of Man. “Jesus holds the seven stars in his right hand, and we were told in Revelation 1:20 that the seven stars were the angels of the seven churches. The angels, which perhaps guard and protect the churches or represent them in heaven, are in the hand of the Son of Man. Ultimately, the protection of each church is in the hands of the glorious Son of Man” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expository Commentary*, 569-70).
- “The reason for addressing churches through their representative angels is to remind them that they have already begun to participate in a heavenly dimension and that their real and eternal home is in that dimension of the new heavens and earth, inaugurated through Christ’s death and resurrection. Such a reminder should motivate them not to place their ultimate security in the old world, as do unbelieving, idolatrous ‘earth-dwellers’” (Beale, *Revelation*, 5).
- “Here, as in other letters, the churches are addressed through their representative angel. The point of this seems to be to remind the churches that their primary existence is spiritual and that they have help ready for them in heaven” (Beale, *Revelation*, 55).