

The *Other* Letter to Ephesus
Rev.2:1-7; II Tim.4:5-8

0.0 Introduction

0.1 Revelation/Apocalypse – the most unusual part of entire New Testament:

- Revelation is about good vs. evil
- Revelation uses genre known as “Jewish Apocalyptic” = God prevails
- Revelation aims to bless and encourage us now
- Revelation ‘recapitulates’: “John is repeating his message, the same message, over and over in the Revelation, but in different words.” (E. Robson, *ad loc.*, p.69)

0.2 That repetition takes form in seven letters to churches (Ch.2-3), in similar writing style:

- letters sent for various purposes: greet, discuss/argue, commend, explain & instruct
- we shall spend time with 2/7 in this sermon series
- letter of Ephesus typical, but especially: to commend (vv.2-3) + to caution (v.4)
- perhaps some of what they needed then, we need now

1.0 Regarding the Seven Letters

1.1 First series block (Rev.2-3): short letters to churches in W. Turkey/Asia Minor (map)

- Revelation/Apocalypse = to reveal, open up – hence commission in 1:11
- see destination map for these locations (*over*)

1.2 But something strange here: these *are* letters, but the Apocalypse is *not*

- e.g. omissions - Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossae, and likely many more
- hint at reason lies in choice of seven

1.3 The Apocalypse is a book of sevens: menorahs & stars & churches (Rev.1-3),

Spirits of God (1:4; 4:5), sealed scrolls (5:1-8:5), angels + trumpets (8:6-11:19),
 more angels + bowls of plagues (16:1-21) – with an overall “heptadic structure”

1.4 In Bible, seven represents God’s full presence, total holiness and complete goodness

2.0 Regarding the “Other” Letter to Ephesus

2.1 Why Ephesus? Major city of Asia Minor:

- Neolithic site taken by 10thC BC Greeks as eastward-looking coastal foothold
- extensive & wealthy city, including 25k theater, 1/7-Wonders - Temple to Artemis
- later: library of Celsus (incl various graffiti, e.g. Jewish menorah ... and Metallica)

2.2 Paul ministered here on both 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys – c.AD57/58

- wrote Ephesian epistle, c.AD62; later, also Bishop Ignatius of Antioch, c.AD100

2.3 The *other* letter to believers at Antioch came via apostle John – Rev.2:1-7

2.4 Parts included: addressee and Sender (v.1), commendation (vv.2-3,6),

correction (v.4), counsel & caution (v.5), reminder & promise (v.7)

- all seven letters in Rev.2-3 align with this formula

2.5 What he commended – vv.2-3

2.6 What he cautioned – vv.4-5 → responsive, with faithfulness ... Council, AD431

3.0 The Importance of This Ephesian Letter for Us Today

3.1 Quite possible, during your life, to wax & wane in love for God

- keep an eye out for things which undercut your focus & fortitude (2:4-5)

(over)

- 3.2 God remembers *your* love and service toward others (2:2a)
- 3.3 We need strength & determination to stand up to evil & tyranny (2:2b)
- 3.4 Encourage others – just do it (2:3a; I Thess.5:11; Heb.3:13; 10:25)
- 3.5 We anticipate a ‘crown of life’ – for life (2:7; Matt.25:23; II Tim.4:8)

Next week (Sept.22) – The Letter to Laodicea – Rev.3:14-22

