

Learning from the Seven Churches of Revelation

Every believer must discern what it means to live out their Christian faith in the midst of the larger culture, and every church must figure out how to live this kind of faith together. The first Christians discovered just how tempting it was to compromise their new faith in order to fit in. The book of Revelation records Jesus' assessment of how seven of those early churches did. Dr. Jeff Weima joins our *Groundwork* conversation to unpack the seven letters or sermons to the seven churches in Revelation. We'll discuss common misperceptions, patterns and themes, and the heart of the messages conveyed to those seven early congregations. Then, we'll consider together what these messages still have to say to the Church today.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- What do you already know, or what do you remember about the seven churches addressed in [Revelation 2-3](#)?
- Do you think living out your Christian faith in secular culture is easy or hard? Why?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [Learning from the Seven Churches of Revelation](#)

READ [Revelation 2-3](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- Are there ways in which you think we Christians today are compromising our faith in order to fit into our culture? What about you in particular—is there an area of your life in which you find yourself tempted to compromise your faith in order to fit into your culture?
- Most of us do not live in cultures that sacrifice meat to idols, but the lesson on idolatry from this chapter still applies. What things or situations today might make a Christian or church guilty of idolatrous compromise?
- Reflect on the “heart” of each message for the seven churches, as summarized by Dr. Jeff Weima (Ephesus: the church of loveless orthodoxy, Pergamum and Thyatira: the church(es) of idolatrous compromise, Smyrna and Philadelphia: the church(es) of the persevering persecuted, Sardis: the church of deadly complacency, and Laodicea: the church of vomit and vanity) and consider the following questions:
 - Did you feel a twinge of conviction as you reflected on any of his descriptions? Does the experience of any particular church resonate with you? Why do you think that is?
 - Which message would most address the current situation in your local church? Why? What do you think a sermon like this would say to your church today?
 - Do you recognize the concerns from any of these messages in your own life of faith or in the life of the global church still today? If so, where?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[1 Corinthians 8](#), [1 Corinthians 12](#), [1 John 4:7-21](#), [Acts 15:22-35](#)

CONCLUSION

As *Groundwork* hosts Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney, and guest co-host Dr. Jeff Weima discussed, the seven sermons to these seven early Christian churches continue to be relevant to our faith and our churches yet today. As Jeff said at the end of the episodes, “There is a word of warning for the Church today to kind of wake up and to recommit themselves to Christ, and by his Spirit to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, not only of Asia Minor but to the Church today.”

As you studied the letters to the seven churches, what encouraged you? What concerns or warnings do you take to heart? Pray through your responses to these questions and the reflections above. As you close, hear Jesus’ note of grace from [Revelation 3:20](#) again, “I am knocking at the door; I want to come in and have dinner with you.”

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