

Identifying the Commendable Church

The text provides a standard of general evaluation for determining the faithfulness of any congregation of the Lord's church.

The marks of apostasy -- Things to avoid (12 condemnations).

1. (2:1-7) -- Leaving first love.
2. (2:14) Compromise (doctrine of Balaam -- Greed 2 Pet. 2:15).
3. (2:6, 15) Factionalism (doctrine of Nicolaitans -- 1 Cor. 1:10).
4. (2:20) Allowing, permitting, false teaching (2 Jn. 6-11).
5. (2:20) Woman usurper and compromiser (Jezebel) (1 Tm. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:34-35; Ac. 15:20, 29).
6. (2:22-23) Those following her error (Ex. 23:2; Mat. 7:13-14).
7. (3:1) Being alive in name only, but most already dead (1 Tm. 5:6).
8. (3:2) Remainder ready to die (Ac. 20:28-31).
9. (3:2) Works unfinished and incomplete (Mat. 23:23; Lk. 11:42; 2 Cor. 8:11; Lk. 9:62).
10. (3:15-16) Being lukewarm (indecisive, uncommitted) (Lk. 16:13; 1 Cor. 10:19-21).
11. (3:17) Proud and boastful (Ps. 10:2; Pr. 21:4; 16:18; 1 Jn. 2:16-17).
12. (3:17-18) Rich in material goods, but destitute of spiritual treasure (Mat. 6:19-20; Lk. 12:15-21).

The commendable church -- Things to initiate and do (16 commendations).

1. (2:2) Tireless labor and patience (Gal. 6:9).
2. (2:2) Not bear those who are evil (Ps. 101:3; Eph. 5:11; 2 Th. 3:6).
3. (2:2) Identify false apostles/teachers (Jn. 5:39; Ac. 17:11; 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 6-11).
4. (2:6) Hate factionalism (deeds of Nicolaitans) (Prov. 6:12-19; 1 Cor. 1:10; 3:3; 11:18).
5. (2:9) Overcome tribulation and poverty (Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12).
6. (2:10) Be faithful even under persecution (by the Jews) (Mt. 10:28; Phil. 4:10-11; Heb. 13:5-6).
7. (2:13) Hold fast Name (Christ's) (Acts 14:12; Rom. 1:16; 2 Pt. 2:1-3).
8. (2:13) Not deny the faith (Jude 3-4).
9. (2:19) Works that are multiplying.
10. (2:19) Love (1 Pet. 1:22-23).
11. (2:19) Service (Mat. 20:25-28; Jn. 13:5-17; Rom. 12:1-2).
12. (2:19) Faith (Rom. 10:9-10; 2 Th. 3:2; Rev. 14:12-13).
13. (2:19) Patience (Jas. 1:2-4; 5:7-11).
14. (3:1-6) The worthy few must be strengthened and preserved (Few will be saved – Mat. 7:13-14; 1 Pet. 4:17-19).
15. (3:7-13) Keepers of the Word (1 Tim. 4:13-16; Jn. 8:51; 14:15, 23; 1 Jn. 2:3).
16. Not deny Name (Christ's) (Mat. 10:32-33).

Corrective action for error (13 measures – some are repeated in the text).

1. (2:5) Remember from where fallen (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Pet. 1:5-12; 3:1).
2. (2:5) Repent (repeated).
3. (2:5) Do the first works.
4. (2:7) Overcome -- said to all seven.
5. (2:7) Hear what the Spirit says to the churches -- said to all seven.
6. (2:9-10) Fear not suffering.
7. (2:10) Be faithful unto death.
8. (2:25) Hold fast till Jesus comes.
9. (3:2) Be watchful.
10. (3:2) Strengthen that which remains.
11. (3:18) Lay up heavenly treasure rather than earthly.
12. (3:3:19) Be zealous.
13. (3:19-20) Listen to Jesus Christ and accept His loving rebuke.

Promises to those who overcome (thirteen).

1. (2:7) Given to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (22:2; Gen. 3:22-24).
2. (2:10) Crown of life
3. (2:11) Not be hurt of the second death (20:14-15).
4. (2:17) Given to eat of hidden manna (Ex. 16:11-15, 33-34; Ps. 78:24:25; Jn. 6:31-35 -- Given by God, Bread of angels, Christ the Messiah).
5. (2:17) Given a new name (Is. 62:2).

A Summary of the Letters to the Seven Churches – Revelation 1 & 2

6. (2:26-27) Given victorious power over the nations (Mat. 5:5; 1 Cor. 3:21-23).
7. (2:28) Given the morning star (Rev. 22:16).
8. (3:5) Clothed in white raiment (Rev. 7:13-14).
9. (3:5) Not blotted out of the book of life.
10. (3:5) Confessed before the Father and His angels.
11. (3:12) Made a pillar in the temple of God.
12. (3:12) Given the name of God, the city of God, and Jesus Christ.
13. (3:21) Granted to sit with Jesus in His throne (3:21).

Warnings of Jesus Christ to the unrepentant (thirteen).

1. "I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place -- unless you repent (2:5).
2. (2:16) "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."
3. (2:21-23) Given time, but failing repentance, will cast leaders and followers into great tribulation, "so that all the churches will know that I am He that searches the minds and hearts."
4. (2:23) I will give to each one of you according to your works.
5. (3:2) Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain.
6. (3:3) Remember how you have received and heard.
7. (3:3) Hold fast and repent.
8. (3:3) If you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you..
9. (3:11) "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.
10. (3:16) Because you are lukewarm, I will vomit you out of my mouth.
11. (3:18) Lay up heavenly treasure.
12. (3:19) As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; Jesus still loved the Laodiceans.
13. (3:19) Be zealous and repent.

Conclusion:

What the church must not be:

1. Loveless
2. Compromising with error or tolerant of evil
3. Tolerant of false teaching by either men or women usurpers of male responsibility
4. Factionalized and fractured
5. Willing to compromise/sin for money (Balaam - 2 Pet. 2:15)
6. Permitting of false teaching/error.
7. Not working
8. Works incomplete or unfinished
9. Inattentive to the spiritual needs of all members
10. Lukewarm (uncommitted, indecisive, neutral)
11. Covetous of material gain
12. Proud and boastful

What the church must be:

1. Tireless in labor and patience
2. Unable to bear evil
3. Able to discern false apostleship/teaching
4. Hate factionalism
5. Determined to overcome tribulation, poverty and persecution
6. Constant and reliable even under persecution
7. Determined to hold fast and uphold the name of Christ
8. Determined contend for the faith and not deny it
9. Growing in works
10. Loving
11. Serving
12. Faithful
13. Patient
14. Protective of the faithful.
15. Keepers of the Word
16. Attentive to Christ and responsive to loving rebuke.