

Some Summary notes on the Seven churches

1. The "Lampstands" (Candlesticks)...a descriptive way of showing the role a church (the churches) hold in the world...bearers of light. He is the light of the world and we are, in Him, the light of the world. Note that even the feeblest of these churches is still a "lampstand."
2. The stars, they are the "angels" of the seven churches (1:20). They are identified as those responsible for the spiritual health of the community...in my mind, the spiritual company. Some have identified them with elders, shepherds, etc. The Lord not only walks among His people and sees their works, he has an intimate relationship with those who know truth.
3. The relation of the Lord to each group. A survey of the way in which the Lord identifies Himself to each community will show something of the nature of their problems and errors as well as their good points. It is interesting to think that in some ways the Lord is all of these things to all of us at the same time. He (in his offices) holds us and walks among us, (2:1, 3:1) bearing the sharp sword (His Word, we think) (2:12) and administering the "Keys of David" -the use of that word (3:7). In His person He is the eternal one (2:8) who proved this by a triumph over death (2:8) and as such is the faithful and true and final Word of God (3:14) from which position He is able to discern and judge all of our works and our claims (3:18)
4. The problems of each group are of interest also. They fall into set categories. The prime error is loss of first love (2:4) followed by undue influence of weaker brethren (2:9) and a willingness to put up with things the Lord hates (2:14) and which are in turn ruinous to us. Toleration of the most wicked sort of things will soon follow (2:20) and unless a company is careful a declension from the truth will occur (2:25). Justly accused on these points, hypocrisy is the next step and that is followed (3:1) by an inability to know one's true condition (3:17) and a total loss of usefulness to the Lord.
5. The good points of the churches are significant. Labours and patient acts in His name are commendable (2:2-3) as is the purification of the testimony through removal of false teachers (2:2, 6). But we must note that good works (physical) easily become a replacement for acts of faith (2:19) and may become a false standard of values (3:1). The most important factor in this matter is the recognition that the Lord knows and that the deeds of life be done honorably as before Him. One will notice that the greater the tolerance of error, the more difficult it is to maintain the sort of works the Lord commends.
6. The challenges to each group need some study. These challenges center around the three action words "repent" (2:5, 16; 3:5, 19) "remember" (2:5, 3:5) and "hold fast" (2:25, 3:5, 11). If we do not observe these points we become callous and inattentive. When they are properly observed, we are better able to live in holiness and godliness. The rest of the charge then becomes significant. We should have no fear and should be faithful and take advantage of all the gracious things the Lord offers us for our health (2:10, 3:18).
7. The watchword is: "If anyone has an ear" (and the suggestion is that we do) that party should hear what the Spirit, speaking through the Lord, says to the churches and church behaviour should be modified thereby.