

Tour of the Holy Lands - Letters to Seven Churches

Mystery Apostle _ _ _ _

- He wrote encouraging letters to seven churches
- He was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos
- His letters can be found in the book of Revelation



The Apostle Paul

- He wrote encouraging letters to many churches
- He was imprisoned in Rome
- His letters can be found throughout the New Testament



As we drive to Laodicea, let's think about how much the church members there were cared for. Not only were they invited to read the helpful letter addressed to the Colossians by the Apostle Paul or by one of his students, but they also received their own helpful letter from another apostle. Can anyone guess who it might be? One clue is that while Paul was imprisoned in Rome, this apostle was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos. All of the mystery Apostle's letters can be found in the book of Revelation. Who has a Bible handy? The apostle's name is in the very first verse of Revelation. Does his name fit on the dotted line above?



Paul and John wrote many helpful letters. Churches were in trouble, and they didn't know what to do to help themselves. One of the biggest problems churches faced was pressure from family, friends and Romans - pressure to leave the church and worship foreign gods. Some members even received death threats if they would not abandon their church and its teachings. Members had to be strong. They could not give in to this pressure. If they did, the churches would slowly disappear, and all the work Paul and his friends had done to bring the teachings of Jesus Christ to this land would be for nothing.





The Apostle John couldn't write to every church, so he chose seven churches that were not too far away from him or from one another: Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Ephesus, Pergamum (per'ga-mum), and Thyatira (thy'a-tye'ra). He wrote to the angel of each church, the one who would understand and pass on the message. The word "angel" means messenger.



The Christ supplied John with the right words to write to each church. John described the Christ in seven different ways. He then described what each church had been doing right, and how to fix the things each church was doing wrong. He reminded each church to keep listening since the Holy Spirit was always guiding them. A church that followed John's advice would be strong and able to last. John probably meant for all seven churches to read all seven letters. The advice was helpful to those churches, and it continues to be helpful to modern-day churches. Today, we will begin to visit all seven churches.

