

# LETTERS TO THE CHURCH

## *Ephesus: The Loveless Church*

### *Revelation 2:1-7*

#### The Church at Ephesus

Revelation 2:1a (KJV) “...*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write;...*”

- Ephesus was a famous city in the ancient world and was famous for the church at Ephesus
- Paul ministered there for 3 years
- Ephesus was also the religious cultural and economic center of the region
- Ephesus was one of the most influential cities in the region
- Ephesus had the temple of Diana, a goddess of fertility and immoral sex
- The temple of Artemis was there and it was a treasury and bank of the ancient world
- Ephesus was also a satanic stronghold
- Jesus writes His letter to the *angel* of the church of Ephesus
- The word *angel* here means the pastor or spiritual leader of the church
- The letter is to *everyone* under the care of a pastoral leader
- Jesus expects the pastor to *personally* heed the message and *lead believers* to heed His message

#### *Jesus Introduces Himself to the Church at Ephesus*

2:1b “...*These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;...*”

- Jesus says this letter is from the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand
- Jesus is the One who holds all pastors of the churches in His hand
- Jesus is the *authority* of the church
- The pastor is *under* the authority of Jesus Christ
- Jesus is the One who walks among the candlesticks or among the churches
- Jesus’ walking among the candlesticks means Jesus’ *manifest presence* is in the midst of the church
- Since Jesus’ presence is in the church, He knows *all about* the church
- If the church truly follows Christ, He is in their midst

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#### **Commendation to the Church at Ephesus**

**<sup>2</sup> I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: <sup>3</sup> And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.**

- Jesus recognized the church at Ephesus for five things:
  1. *The church worked and labored for Christ*
    - a. Jesus said *I know* or I'm familiar with your works, your service
  2. *The patiently endured*
    - a. Ephesus persevered and endured the trials and temptations of life
  3. *The church could not bear those who were evil*
    - a. Ephesus did not tolerate those who were corrupt and were committed to living for the world instead of living for God
  4. *The church tested all the preachers and teachers of the church and rejected the false ones* **1 John 4:1 (KJV) 1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.**
    - a. Ephesus was loyal to Jesus Christ and tested preachers to ensure they were teaching the right message
  5. *The church continued to serve without getting weary*
    - a. Ephesus continued to work, persevere, not put up with evil, they tested and rejected false teachers in the church all for the cause of Christ
- Ephesus "looked like":
  - a. a true church that was *sold out* for Jesus Christ
  - b. a church was *loyal and devoted* to Jesus

#### **Jesus' Complaint Against the Church at Ephesus**

**<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**

- Jesus says to Ephesus, *nevertheless*, or "despite all that"
- When Jesus looks at the church (us), He takes a *complete look*, the good and bad

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- Despite all the good Ephesus had done, they had a serious problem, they had *left* their first love
- They have *left*, “not lost” their first love, what’s the difference?
- Something can be lost by accident, but leaving something is a deliberate act
- Their first love was their love of Jesus and love of one another
- Jesus was no longer first in their lives
- Even though Ephesus had left their first love, everything “looked good” on the outside
- A church can’t be a church without love in its heart
- When a church leaves its first love, things aren’t like they used to be

#### ***What Jesus Commands Ephesus to Do***

***<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. <sup>6</sup> But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.***

- Jesus commands the church at Ephesus and us to do three things
  1. *Remember* – Remember from where you have fallen
    - This means remembering where they used to be in their love for Jesus and with each other
    - Remembering is always the first step in getting back to where we should be with the Lord
  2. *Repent* – Repentance is turning away from whatever pulled you away from Jesus and turn back to Him
    - Repentance is a U-turn in life
    - Jesus is making an urgent appeal for an immediate change in thoughts, attitude and conduct before it’s too late
  3. *Repeat* - Do your first works over, go back to the very first things you did when you first fell in love with Jesus
    - Go back to spending time in the Word
    - Go back to daily time in prayer
    - Go back to church in-person
    - God back to fellowshiping with other believers
    - Go back to telling others about Jesus

**LETTERS TO THE CHURCH**  
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***Revelation 2:1-7***

- If we don't repent, Jesus will come quickly and remove your lampstand from its place
- The church may "still exist", but the light, the glory, Jesus' presence and the witness to the world will have departed
- It will be a church that just goes through the motions
- They stood up against the Nicolaitans who believed that Jesus had done away with the Old Testament and instituted a law of "Christian liberty"
- The church at Ephesus *stood against* the spiritual error of the Nicolaitans and *stood for* the truth of God's Word, but they lacked the *main thing*, love for Christ

***The Promise to the Overcomers***

***<sup>7</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.***

- Jesus says, *He that has an ear*, to everyone that will *listen*
- This letter was not just written to the church Ephesus, it is written to us today
- Let him *hear* what the Spirit is saying to the *churches*
- Jesus wants us to hear what the Spirit is saying to all seven churches: not just to Ephesus
- If we *overcome* and return to our first love, Jesus promises we will eat from the tree of life
- We must overcome everything that pulls our heart and love away from Jesus
- Jesus promises the tree of life to the faithful and victorious followers of Jesus Christ
- Jesus promises the overcomers citizenship in the paradise of God
- That is the glorious promise to the overcoming believers