

REVELATION



Revelation 2

Church at Ephesus

- **The first thing necessary**
is that we learn
what the church **IS**.
- This is the **aim** of
chapters 2 and **3**.

- Each of the **SEVEN** letters is addressed to "**the angel**" of that church;
- Preacher, bishops or elders.

• In the book of Revelation God's angels are those who speak or act.

- **EPHESUS**
- **The church which had lost its first love.**
- **It is easy to drift even though one is active as church workers**
- **and lose that first love.**

· Ephesus had
rejected the Nicolaitans
who said,

● *“It doesn't matter how
we live so long as our
doctrines are correct.”*

**Let us remember
that true life
and true doctrine
both depend on how
much we love Christ.**

Letter To The Church In Ephesus

- Ephesus was the capital of the province of Asia and a major city of importance to all Asia Minor.
- It was believed to have had a population of 300,000

• **The crowning glory of
Ephesus was the
temple of Diana,
one of the seven wonders
of the ancient world.**

**It is was made of pure marble
and glittered in the Sun.**

- **The Temple of Artemis**
(Greek)
also known as
Temple of Diana
(Roman)
was located in Ephesus
(in present-day Turkey).

- **Though the monument was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, only foundations and sculptural fragments of the temple remain.**
- **The whole temple was made of marble except for the roof.**

- The 2nd-century Acts of John includes an apocryphal tale of the temple's destruction:
- The apostle John prayed publicly in the Temple of Artemis, exorcising its demons and "of a sudden the altar of Artemis split in many pieces... and half the temple fell down," instantly converting the Ephesians, who wept, prayed or took flight.[17]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Artemis

Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100-400* 1984, p 26.

- The **Acts of John** is a collection of narratives and traditions ascribed to John the Apostle.
- It is long known in fragmentary form.
- Together with the **Acts of Paul** it is considered one of the most significant of the apostolic Acts in the New Testament apocrypha.
- It was condemned as **a Gnostic heresy by the Church.**

- Ephesus was also a center for crime and immorality.
- The Temple of Artemis was filled with hundreds of priestesses who were sacred prostitutes.

Heraclitus,

the weeping philosopher,

attributed his tears to the

fact that no one

could live in Ephesus

• without

weeping at the immorality.

The church in Ephesus was probably the foremost of the seven.

It is assumed that Paul founded it. (Acts 18, 19, 20; 1st Timothy 1:3-4)

There the apostle lived and labored for three years.

• Also **Apollos**, an Alexandrian Jew, had labored there. (Acts 18)

• In later years, **Timothy** made his home in Ephesus and so did **John**.

**Paul's great
farewell address
was delivered to the
Ephesian elders
in Acts 20.**

• Two apostolic letters
were written to the
Ephesian church

One by Paul

One by John.

**2:1 To the angel of the church
in Ephesus write**

- Addressed to the “angel” messenger or minister.
- To be read to the assembly.

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

• Dictated

by the Lord Jesus.

• Written

by the hand of John.

- **1st** – He holds the “**stars**” or ministers in his right hand.
 - He **sustains** them.
 - He **protects** them.
 - He **directs** them.

**These things saith he
that holdeth the seven stars
in his right hand,
he that walketh
in the midst of the
seven golden candlesticks.**

2nd – He

**walks in the midst
of the candlesticks
or churches.**

• The glorified Christ is present
in the churches to

• inspect,

• warn,

• encourage,

• condemn,

• reward.

2:13 And in
the midst of
the candlesticks
one like unto
the son of man

Condemnation (Vs. 2,3,6)

2:2 “ I know thy works”

• Having eyes “as a flame of fire”
(1:14)

- He saw their activities.
- He knew all about them.

- **Nothing good or bad had escaped His notice
(Heb. 4:12-13)**

- **He has clear recollection
of all their deeds.**

- **Nothing is forgotten.**

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight:

- **but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.**

2:2b And thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles and they are not, and didst find them false;

- **Paul had foretold such false teachers (Gnostics),**
“grievous wolves”
(Acts 20:29)

- **Jesus had warned of**
“wolves in sheep's clothing”
(Mt 7:15)

**2:3 and thou hast
patience and
didst bear for
my name's sake,
and hast
not grown weary.** ●

Three things

were right:

1st The life was right.

- They had labored
unto weariness.

- They had “learned to labor
and to not grow weary.”

- Without complaint they had
endured fierce opposition.

2nd The discipline was right.

• They had set themselves against
“evil men”.

• It is right to bear with
a weak brother,....

• But not with a false one.

(Rom. 15:1,2; 2 John 10-11)

3rd They had

tested the teachings

of self-styled apostles

and found them **false**.

(Acts 20:28-30)

The Condemnation

(2: 4)

V. 4 “But” -- What an ominous transition word!

- A fly was in the ointment.

2:4b “I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love.”

- The church suffered only one ailment...
- But it was a serious one...

A heart ailment.

• While they hated the things
the Lord hated

• They did not love
all the things He loved.

When
love wanes,
every virtue
is in danger.

**This is true because “love” is
at the root of every virtue.
(1 Cor. 13)**

- **What was the cause of this
waning love?**
- **It was attachment to the
present world.**

**Love for the world
will stifle one's love
for the Lord.**

(Matthew 24:12; 1 John 2:15)

• **No heart is big enough to
love the Lord and the world
at the same time.**

- **Sadly, too many are attempting to heal the church by tinkering with its structure, its services, its public face.**

- **It is is clear that that the devil has successfully palmed off one of his greatest deceptions.**

- **Convincing folks that God himself is secondary to organization and image,**

- **That the church's health lies in its flow charts,**
 - **its convenience,**
 - **And its entertainment rather than in its inner life,**

- Its spiritual authenticity,

- The toughness
of its

- moral intentions,

**Its understanding
of what it means
to have God's Word
in this world.**

- **The fundamental problem**

**in the world today
is that:**

- **God's word rests
too unimportantly
upon the church.**

- His truth
is too demanding,

- His judgment
is too harsh.

Exhortation and Warning

• **2:5** Remember

**therefore whence thou
at fallen, and repent
and do the first works.**

- When the heart grows cold it suffers a relapse and falls.
 - Christ said so –
“*thou art fallen*”.
- In an effort to revive their fading love, he called three things into action.

1st their memory:

- **The memory of brighter days and a better land caused Israel to weep by the willows. (Psalm 137)**⁵⁵

Psalms 137:1

**By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea,
we wept, When we
remembered Zion.**

• **The memory of**
brighter days

caused a prodigal to say,

• **“I will arise and go to my
father’s house.” (Lk.15)**

2nd Their will –

**Repentance involves the
will of the mind.**

**Coldness of heart
is a sinful condition**

**and the only remedy is
repentance.**

3rd Their bodies –

- **“Do the first works”**

- That is, the works prompted by their **first love.**

(Eph. 1:15-16)

2:5b “or else I come to thee, and will **remove** the candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.”

The candlestick is the
church.

(Rev 1:20)

- Doctrinal purity
is important,
- Discipline is important,
- But these alone
will not save the church
from extinction.

- **Without the presence of brotherly love, no congregation can long exist.**
- **Coldness of heart will remove the best things of live.**

**Rev 2:6 But this thou hast, that
thou hatest the works of the
Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

- **Christ himself hates the
teachings and deeds of the
Nicolaitans**

- **Not the people but the deeds⁶³**

Irenaeus (writing in the late second century) described what he knew of the Nicolaitans: "The Nicolaitanes are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrifice to idols." (Against Heresies, book 1, chapter 26. From the Ante Nicene Fathers Volume 1, page 352)

Hippolytus, a student of Irenaeus (writing in the early third century) associated the Nicolaitans with the Gnostics: "There are, however, among the Gnostics diversities of opinion . . . But Nicolaus has been a cause of the wide-spread combination of these wicked men. [He] departed from correct doctrine, and was in the habit of inculcating indifferency of both life and food." (*Refutation of all Heresies, book 7, chapter 24; ANF volume 5, page 115*)

2:6 *But this thou hast* –
to their credit.

• *that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitians, which I also hate*”

• Christians should hate the things
the Lord hates.

• And love the things He loves.

When Jesus says

he hates

something,

- **it should really**
get our attention.

Encouragement

2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that over cometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

A two fold admonition:

- 1st: To hear the words of the Spirit.

- Each of the seven churches received this same admonition

**The heart that is
open to God's word
is soon filled with
God's grace.**

- Including the grace of love, which they had lost.
(Matt 11:15)

2nd To overcome the world:

- They were not to conform their lives to the world.

(Romans 12:2)

- To the victor is promised the tree of life.

- **This life-giving tree, which thrived in Eden, was lost by an act of disobedience;**
- **Now may be regained by acts of obedience.**

From this letter we learn

1. That Christ is omniscient.

- He knows all about us.
 - Our words...
 - Our deeds...
- The secret emotions of the heart.

- 2. That Christ
seems more intent
on finding the good
• than the evil in the
lives of his people.**

• He sees the good
before he sees the evil.

• He finds the good
as a matter of delight,

• But the evil
as a painful necessity.

- 3. That a Christian should**
hate everything
that Christ hates
- **And love everything**
that Christ loves.
(Matthew 5:1-12)

4th That when a Christian
departs from love,

• he departs from God:

• “for God is love.”

(1 John 4:8)

5th That the Christian
who has left his
first love,

- has fallen and stands
in need of repentance.

6th That without the
spirit of brotherly love,
a congregation is doomed
to extinction,

- No matter how pure
her doctrine
- Or stern her discipline.

**Doors of the church
are open.**

**Spirit & Bride Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17