

The Seven Churches and Church History

Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7) (70-100 A.D.)

Ephesus was a major port city on the western coast of Asia Minor, in what is today known as Turkey. As a center for seaborne trade and the hub of the region's road system, Ephesus was a thriving urban community. By the late first century A.D., it was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire. The Romans made Ephesus an administrative center for the province of Asia. The governor and other officials from Rome entered the province through the harbor and conducted much of their business in the city.

Renowned religious shrines, a spacious theater, stadium, and elegant public buildings gave Ephesus an integral place in the cultural life of the entire region. In the mid-first century A.D., Paul worked at Ephesus for several years.

Artemis was the principal goddess of Ephesus. She and her brother Apollo were said to be the children of Zeus and Leto. Artemis is often described as a virgin huntress, fearless in opposing her adversaries. At Ephesus, she seems to have been a mother goddess, a provider of fertility, and overseer of childbirth.

1. The Letter to Ephesus: Rev 2:1-7

A. Recipients and description of the speaker. 2:1

"To the angel (**AGGELOS** = messenger) of the church in Ephesus write (**Aor Act Imp GRAPHW** = write): The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand ("**angels**" of the churches), the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands (**churches**), says this:

2:1 L.T. = To the messenger of the church at Ephesus write: The One securely holding the seven stars in His right hand, the One walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands says these things:

Summary:

1. The _____ has already been defined. Rev 1:16-20
2. The letter is to the primary _____ in each church who is described as securely in the right hand of the Lord.

3. This message is from the Lord Himself and is to be read (“heard”) by the _____ churches.
4. The description that the Speaker gives of Himself denotes the _____ and relationship that messengers and churches have with Him.

B. Commendations. 2:2

I know your deeds (**ERGOS**) and your toil (**KOPOS**) and perseverance (**HUPOMON8** = **patience toward circumstances**), and that you cannot endure (**Aor Act Inf BASTADZW** = **27x; to hold up, bear up under**) evil men (**KAKOS** = **inherently evil**), and you put to the test (**Aor Act Ind PEIRADZW** = **to test as of metals**) those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

2:2 L.T. = I know your works and your labor under adversity and your patience toward circumstances and that you are not being able to tolerate evil men and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles and they are not, and you found them liars.

C. Commendations continued. 2:3

and you have (**Pres Act Ind ECHW** = **have at the present**) perseverance (**HUPOMON8**) and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary (**OU + Perf Act Ind KOPIAW** = **to labor to the point of exhaustion; i.e. have not totally been worn out**).

2:3 L.T. = And you have patience toward circumstances and have endured for my name's sake and have not grown totally weary.

Summary:

1. This church had a high knowledge and activity level that endured _____ and accurately identified the wolves.
2. When this letter was written, the Ephesian church still had _____ zeal toward knowing and doing God's will although they had grown weary in some ways.
3. The singular of "you" is consistently used in this letter, which indicates that the Lord is directly addressing the _____ attitudes which usually filter through the church.

D. The problem. 2:4

'But (**ALLA**) I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

2:4 L.T. = But, I have *this* against you (singular = the messenger), that you have left your first love (AGAPE).

Summary:

1. Their "first love" was their love for _____ in which Paul had commended them some 35 years earlier. Eph 1:15
2. They had grown weary in their love for one another which had affected their love for God (1 John 4:19-21) with the result of _____ (1 Cor 8:1).
3. This happens when "_____ purity" becomes more important than the people for which Christ died.

E. Solution and warning. 2:5

'Remember (**2S Pres Act Imp MN8MONEUW = keep remembering**) therefore from where you have fallen, and repent (**2S Aor Act Imp METANOEW = change the mind**) and do (**2S Aor Act Imp POIEW**) the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent.

2:5 L.T. = Keep remembering therefore from where you have fallen and change your mind and begin to do the first works; or else I am going to come to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place-unless you change your mind.

Summary:

1. The messenger must consistently _____ his own labor of love and when it wanes, he must initiate change.
2. The result of failure in this area is that the Lord Himself _____ the church from lighting the darkness.
3. Although the church may continue to exist through fleshly energy, it will have no _____ spiritual impact.

F. Commendation. 2:6

'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

2:6 L.T. = But this you do have that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Summary:

1. The Nicolaitans were the Balaam's of their day who _____ God's Word for money, led people into immorality and idolatry, violated decrees of the Jerusalem Council, sponsored a priestly hierarchy and promoted self-indulgence. Cf 2:14-15
2. They were followers of Nicholas, who may have been one of the first _____. Acts 6:15
3. Many believe this group became the _____.
4. There should be a total _____ of this activity.

G. Listen, overcome and be rewarded. 2:7

'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.'

2:7 L.T. = The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will grant to him to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Summary:

1. We are to pay attention to what the Holy Spirit is revealing to _____ churches.
2. Faith and the appropriate _____ that follow is what overcomes. 1 John 5:5
3. Sin caused separation from the Tree of _____ (Gen 3:22-24), but on another "tree" sin was paid for (1 Pet 2:24) so that by faith we could eat from the tree of eternal life (Rev 22:2).
4. Here the "overcomer" is the one who by faith repents and begins to _____ again.

Description of the Speaker: (Relationship)

1. Holds seven stars in His right hand.
2. Walks among the seven lampstands.

Commendations: Works, labor under adversity, patience, doctrinally sound, endurance under pressure, not burned out, hates dishonest gain.

Problem: They left the love of the brethren.

Solution:

1. Remember past good.
2. Repent.
3. Restart works.

Potential Discipline: Lose their position of being a light.

Rewards: Eat from Tree of Life in the Paradise of God.

Summary: Ephesus was a doctrinally sound church that forgot the importance of spiritual relationships.

An Ephesus Overcomer overcomes self to love others.

The desired character trait is a love for God and others.

