

"Thou Hast Left Thy First Love"

Loyal But Lacking
Revelation 2:1-7

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write..." verse 1

- Two letters were written to the Ephesian church:
 - One by Paul... Ephesians
 - One by Jesus Christ (in their "midst" 1:13, 16)
- Though written by the hand of John, the letter was dictated by the Lord Himself. cf. Revelation 1:4-5, 8, 18

Background of the city:

- Ephesus was a wealthy, prosperous, city know for its shrine to the goddess Diana. Temple considered on of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.



Ephesus

Background of the city:

- During its glorious days, it was a main harbor for the largest ships.
- It was also easily accessible by land, because Ephesus was connected by highways to the most important cities of Asia Minor. It had been for a long time the commercial center of Asia.
- Ephesus attracted all kinds of people. The wealthy and learned as well as the poor and illiterate.
- The general condition of life was that of a wealthy, cultured, and place of refuge for criminals.

Ephesus

Background of the church:

- Paul visited Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21) on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem on his 2nd preaching journey about 52 AD.
- Acts 18:26 Paul left Priscilla and Aquila there and they taught Apollos while there (Acts 18:25).
- Paul again visited Ephesus on his 3rd journey spending 3 years (Acts 20:31).

Ephesus

The work of Paul was greatly blessed. The sale of silver shrines began to fall, creating an uproar. Acts 19:23ff

- Paul reviewed his work among the Ephesian elders, prophesied their future and bid them farewell in Miletus. Acts 20:17-38. About 57 AD.
- During the first Roman imprisonment, Paul wrote the letter to the church in Ephesus. About 60-63 AD.
- Later Paul left Timothy in Ephesus and wrote 1 Timothy.
- A few years later we find the apostle John in Ephesus (about 81-96? AD). He is now exiled to the isle of Patmos.

Church In Ephesus – Commendation Revelation 2:2, 3, 6

Its Works. *"I know thy works and thy toil..."* verse 2; cf. Revelation 3:1

- There is no place in the church for an idler. John 9:4; Matthew 20:1; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 2:14

Church In Ephesus – Commendation Revelation 2:2, 3, 6

Its Endurance. *"Perseverance" (NASV)*
"you have persevered and have patience," NKJV verses 2-3

- They had patiently maintained their defense of the truth in the name of Christ; meeting false teachers and false doctrines. *"Not grown weary" cf. Galatians 6:9*

Church In Ephesus – Commendation Revelation 2:2, 3, 6

Its Discipline. Verse 2

- Evil men. *"Thou canst not bear evil men..."* Intolerance!
 - It is right to bear patiently with a weak brother. cf. Romans 14:1;15:1.
 - But we are not to endure evil men. Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 2 John 9-11

Church In Ephesus – Commendation Revelation 2:2, 3, 6

Its Discipline. Verse 2

- False doctrine. *"and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false."*
- Here Paul's prophecy came true. Acts 20:38-30; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 John 4:1-2
- *"thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."* Revelation 2:6
 - *"those that hold the teaching of Balaam" (2:14), and the followers of the woman "Jezebel" (2:20).*

Church In Ephesus – Condemnation

Revelation 2:4 *"But I have (this) against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love."* cf. 2 Timothy 3:5

- Individual Christians need exhortation toward faithfulness. cf. The Ephesian letter! (cf. Colossians 2:6-7; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 6:10; Hebrews 5:12-14)

Church In Ephesus – Condemnation

Revelation 2:4 *"But I have (this) against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love."*

Have we left our first love? cf. Hebrews 2:1ff

- Used to ...
 - be faithful in attendance.
 - study each day.
 - pray often ... giving thanks, but now don't pray or pray only when trouble comes.
 - be interested in converting others.
 - Can't live on "used to..."

Church In Ephesus – Exhortation

Revelation 2:5 *"Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works ..."*

"Remember ..."

- Remember where you were. Psalms 137:1-6; cf. Luke 15; cf. Hebrews 10:32

Church In Ephesus – Exhortation

Revelation 2:5 *"Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works ..."*

"Repent ..."

- "Repentance" means "to change one's mind for the better, heartily TO AMEND with abhorrence of one's past sins." (Thayer)
- "This change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God." (W.E. Vine)
- A.T. Robertson said that when John called upon his hearers to repent, "John did not call on people to be sorry, but to change their mental attitudes AND CONDUCT." (Word Pictures in the N.T.)

Church In Ephesus – Exhortation

Revelation 2:5 *"Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works ..."*

"Repent ..."

- Ninevites. Matthew 12:41; cf. Jonah 3:10.
- Rebellious son. Matthew 21:28-29.
- Prodigal son. Luke 15:11-21.
- Ephesians brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. Acts 19:19.

Church In Ephesus – Exhortation

Revelation 2:5 *"Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works"*

"Do the first works" cf. Acts 19:10

Church In Ephesus – Warning

Revelation 2:5 *"... or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place"*

- Threatened visit of judgment. *"Quickly" (KJV)*

- Threatened extinction.
 - The candlestick (local church, 1:20), would be removed.

Church In Ephesus – Promise

Revelation 2:7 *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.*

"To him that overcometh"

To the conqueror.

"To him will I give to eat of the tree of life" Contrast to idolatry.

"Which is in the Paradise of God."
cf. Genesis 3:22; Revelation 22:2, 14, 19

• Have you left your first love?