

Revelation Study Guide

Chapter 2 - Ephesus



Rev. 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Ephesus is the beginning church. It's name means "desirable". This church shares the meaning of its name with that of a Greek man's hoped for bride. (Greek is the original language of the New Testament.) This is a perfect description for this church because she marks the beginning of the bride of Jesus Christ. Even though there will be seven historical divisions to the church, it's still just one bride.

Eph. 5:25 - ". . . even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." She is called desirable for that reason.

This church's time period began AD 30 and ended AD 100. This time frame is also known as the Apostolic Church Age. AD 30 was the approximate year Jesus began His ministry, called His disciples, and began the Christian church. By A.D. 98, John (the writer of the Book of Revelation) had passed. With his death, the Apostolic Age was brought to a close. This is the era comprising the writing of the entire New Testament and the first evangelical movement.



Ruins at Ephesus



The Destination-The first line in the verse is addressing the messenger to or pastor of the church of Ephesus. (Remember in Ch. 1 we learned the Angel of the church is the pastor)

The Description- Following the first line comes the specific self-proclaimed description of Jesus. **"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."** This is a personal reference denoting it is He himself who holds the stars (pastors) in his hand. Walking



among the candlesticks refers to the church body. He is there among them (us) watching. Some people tend to blame the preacher when the message of a sermon addresses the sin in their life. Jesus is telling us He is the one walking among us. He knows and sees where we are in our lives. Sermons are multi-faceted. The Lord knows what you need whether it be encouragement, rebuking, guidance or anything else. Jesus said, " I have the pastor in my right hand and it is the pastor's responsibility to remain sensitive to my spirit so that he may give the message I command to the church."

Ruins at Ephesus



1. Who is the angel of the church at Ephesus?
2. Who is speaking to the pastor?
3. What is Jesus giving to the pastor?
4. In Jesus' description of himself who is in His right hand?
5. In Jesus' description what are the candlesticks that he walks in the midst of?

Rev. 2:2. 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:

The Comendation- When Jesus says, "**I know thy works**" He is telling us that He looks to ensure we are doing what He has assigned us. Some will say that our works should be social good works such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and sheltering the poor. While these things come naturally when you serve the Lord, this is not the work that Jesus is talking about. He is referring to **Mark 16:15** where He said "**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**" This is known as the Great Commission. We must make disciples of mankind by teaching people God's word.

"**I know thy labour**" speaks of the early evangelical effort to spread the Gospel to the world. The Lord knew the hardship of His disciples.

"**and thy patience**" Jesus recognized the endurance of the early Christian. They were faithful unto death.

"**and how thou canst not bear them which are evil**"- People who are evil can and do enter the doors of a holy church. Jesus had warned in the Gospels more than once to be aware of the false teachers that would come. There are some people who are evil: the spirit that drives them is evil. The results of their life tends to evil. Jesus knew the apostles and leaders of the Ephesus church would not tolerate the presence of evil people among them.

"and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:" There were those who came among them who claimed themselves to be special messengers of God. They were sent by the evil one to corrupt the church. The pastor and members of this church tested these messengers. The apostles' doctrine was used as a test to determine spirituality and correctness of doctrine. The people of the church of Ephesus knew the Word of God. They recognized very quickly that the false apostles' doctrine and lives didn't match the Biblical pattern. This is why they were not deceived.

A class of false teachers called "Judaizers" forced themselves upon the young church. These people were false teachers who aimed to lead the church astray. These teachers came amongst the church telling the followers that the law must continue to be kept. This meant they still had to be circumcised; they could not eat certain kinds of meat: they were still bound to all of the laws of the Jew. However, when Jesus died he became the final sacrifice for sin. When the Gentiles were saved they were exempted from certain aspects of the law. They were still bound to the moral parts of the law. These were, do not eat the food sacrificed to idols, do not be involved with idolatry, and do not be involved with fornication. A believer was to be morally and spiritually clean. There was no need to continue with the Jewish rituals and feasts that were fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus Christ. These people were call "Judaizers" because they wanted to place the church back under the Jewish law. In some ways that is what churches like the Seventh Day Adventist desire to do to us today.

6. What are your works, labour, and patience?
7. Why can't the apostles bear evil?
8. How did they try men to see if they are evil?

Rev. 2:3. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

These people carried his word and persisted when opposition arose.

"And for my name's sake thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted." The people of this church worked diligently for the name of Jesus. They worked with patience, strength, and great effort. Patience, labor, and strength are all qualities that God likes in man. ***Luke 18:1 KJV*** ***"men ought always to pray, and not to faint."*** That is what these people did.

9. What does Jesus mean when He says "And hast borne, and hast patience?"
10. What does Jesus mean when He says "and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."?

Rev. 2:4. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

The Condemnation- "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee" Jesus saw something in this church that did not please Him, perhaps even hurt Him.

"Because thou hast left thy first love." The first love of any Church should be Jesus. He was the first love of this church, but something happened. They lost their wonder and awe for the Lord. He became another fixture in the church. Something grew cold in the hearts of these Christians. No longer were they secure in their relationship with Jesus. No longer did they carry that "first love" feeling inside of them. First love makes one unavailable to another suitor, the loss of it opens a person up to new love interests. These people let the world pull their emotions away from where they should have been focused.

11. What does Jesus mean when He says "I have somewhat against thee"?

12. What does Jesus mean by thou hast left thy first love"?

Rev. 2:5. 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.

The Council- What did Jesus reveal in this statement? "**Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.**" He was not saying they could fall. Jesus said they are "fallen" and must repent. They had started down the path of going away from the Lord, which if they continued would lead back to sinful lives. Unrighteousness will not enter into heaven. Those who do not repent will not enter into heaven. There is no safety in any kind of sin.

What does "**repent and do the first works**" mean? Jesus wanted Ephesus to renew their experience with Him. He desired them to live as they lived when they were newly converted.. Most can remember their first year as a Christian - how they acted, spoke, thought, read the Word, went to church. It was with a zeal and vigor. Jesus only wanted them to become as they were.

"Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." He explains to these people that they are at risk of losing their destiny. They were in danger of losing His will for their lives. This scripture is an excellent example of the same warning given to the Jews. ***"Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."* (Mal 1:10-11 KJV)** The Jewish nation had forgotten God. They had left their first love. God explained in this passage of the Old Testament how He accepted the worship from the Gentiles because they obeyed His methods. This opened the door for the Gentiles to be saved. Even in the New Testament, salvation was offered to the Jew first, but as the Jews rejected Jesus the doors were again opened to the Gentiles.



Gift of Love

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13. What does Jesus mean when he says "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen"?
14. What must this church do to correct what is wrong?
15. What are your first works?
16. What does Jesus mean by "or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent"?

Rev. 2:6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

It is said a man named Nicolas founded the Nicolaitans. He was a proselyte. This means that he was not Jewish by race, but went through the process of becoming a Jew. Nicolas decided that he also wanted to be a Christian. He worked so diligently in the Christian church he became a deacon of the church body. He decided that he liked being a deacon, but he thought that he should be completely in charge of things. He formed the Nicolaitans. Their name was quite appropriate. Its meaning is, to overthrow the laity or take over the church. He developed a religious party where the preachers dressed differently than the members. He began including Babylonian teachings in the doctrine of his church. These included idol worship, sexual rituals, and many others. He added a few opinions of his own as well. They taught separation of spirit and body. This meant the spirit and body are apart from each other. The spirit is pure, but the flesh is evil. What the body does has no effect on the spirit and vice versa.

As can be imagined, this was much more popular than a Bible believing church. God tells all to crucify these lusts and cast them away. ***"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you " (2 Cor 6:17 KJV)***

This is a battle fought by Christians of every age and time. Nicolaitanism was tried against the Word of God and found to be evil. Every doctrine that says it is of God must align with the word of God. Heresy has no place in the Christian life, soul, or church. Christians of today are now facing a strong Charismatic movement. These churches use sensual music, compromised doctrine, affirming lifestyles, prosperity, and appeals to all fleshly aspects to win the world for Christ (charismatic churches will be discussed in chap. 3 with the church of Laodicea).

The words of all men should always be compared with the Word of God. There are those who know the Word and doctrine of Christianity better than Christians. The devil is included in this category. When Satan came to Jesus in the desert he attempted to trap Jesus in the Word by slanting and twisting it for his dark purpose. However, Jesus knew the Word better than His opponent because Jesus is the Word. Jesus used it as a tool to defeat the enemy. As a Christian it is imperative for you to know and understand the Word of God. It is a true weapon against all opposition. Wield it incorrectly and it will be used against you.

There is a spirit behind everything, whether it is God, Antichrist, or human. The spirit of the false teacher can and must be tried. One of the gifts of the Spirit is discernment. When a person walks the walk of a Christian and even before, he knows when the actions of someone are moral and just. When a man or woman is saved his or her ability to discern is heightened.

A Christian must know the Word of God to try the spirit. There are times when evil spirits are so subtle that they fool the most humanly discerning. It is crucial to be in tune with the Holy Ghost at all times. He is the true source of discernment. What is important to keep in mind is that a person can do terrible things that aren't of God or the devil-- it is the human flesh at work. The Word of God says when the devil is resisted, he must flee. A human being will hang in where the devil would run. Be comforted knowing when your spirit is right, the Holy Ghost will show you all evil.

Some men are instruments of demons. These men can be very strong in their knowledge of the Bible. They use deception and trickery to build their kingdoms on Earth. Sometimes they are so polished that they actually convince themselves. Paul referred to them in **(2 Cor. 2:17 KJV) "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."** Not everyone who proclaims Christianity is a Christian. Paul continues to refer to these men **"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."** (2 Tim 3:13 KJV) A believer should always be wary. Never doubt the presence of evil and its ability to disguise itself.

There is a Charismatic ministry that silences its opposition by calling people judgmental or too critical. The seeker of God who is hungry for the truth gets blind-sided by false preaching because he or she is new in the faith. The veterans of Christianity can also be misled by the smooth words that pour forth like honey from the mouths of this ministry. One such quote taken from a conversation seen on TV is "if anyone speaks a word against this ministry, God will kill them instantly." They intimidate and cause fear. This puts people under their authority and into bondage. A true man of God makes no one a prisoner. Instead, he tells his people that the Word of God will set them free. Doctrine is to be tried against the written Word. The spirit tried against the Holy Ghost. Sin is never acceptable in the sight of God.

17. What does Jesus mean when He says, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate"?

Rev. 2:7. 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.

The Discrimination- **"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."** The spirit speaks in this message, but not everyone hears it. Some new, popular doctrine of today will say that God is not a gentleman. They will say that the mind is imposed upon to save the soul. Christ is not the big thunder, earthquake, or lightning. He is that still small voice that guides through right and wrong. He does not need to yell or impose His will. Those who are willing to fulfill the commandments of the Father will hear His voice inside of their hearts. **"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."** (Mat 5:8 KJV)

The Promise- **"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."** The devil will try to overcome every church and every member of the church. He knows what will tempt each person and he will make an appeal where there is weakness. The devil can do nothing without the consent of the person targeted. The Nicolaitains said it is acceptable to eat from both the tree of forbidden fruit and the tree of life simultaneously. Jesus said that only when a person overcomes this evil, may he eat from the Tree of Life in Heaven. Jesus offers us eternal life. This is a promise that will stand for all eternity.

18. What does Jesus mean by "hear what the spirit says?"
19. What will he give them if they hear the message?



Ephesus, the Hadrian temple 2nd C. AD