

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### “First Love Left”

Revelation 2:1-7

#### Introduction

1. This is the first of the seven letters to the seven churches (cf. 1:11, 10). It is estimated there were hundreds of churches then, but these seven were selected (1:12, 13).

2. Ephesus was about 60 miles from Patmos (1:9) and was a commercial and political center. It was the center for the worship of Diana (Acts 19:38). God established His church there (Acts 19), but today it is virtually gone.

3. The seven churches were real local assemblies (cf. 1:19). They demonstrate the peculiar problems of the early church and exhibit the ascending evil of this age which closes in apostasy.

4. Remember: a. Christ holds ( ) the seven stars, (Angels or Pastors) in His right hand. The verb notes total sovereignty, mastery, and possession. b. Christ walks around ( ) in the midst of the seven candlesticks (churches). c. Christ speaks through John to the Pastor ( ) of the Ephesian church (cf. 1:1, 2:1).

5. Here are some significant details of the written message:

1. The Church's CONDITION KNOWN vv. 2, 3

The verb “know” speaks of innate knowledge. There is no guesswork with the omniscience of Christ. This is what He knows.

a. Personal Items vv. 2, 3

1) Works ( ). Nothing is said about the “kind” of works. However, their mention is notable and obviously followed salvation (Eph. 2:10; Titus 3:8, 14).

2) Labor ( ). This term denotes laborious toil and the associated fatigue. They really put their hearts into it.

3) Patience ( ). Here is endurance. The Church put out and stayed with the stuff (cf. 1 Thess. 1:3 for all these words).

b. Practical Items vv. 2, 3, 6

1) Could not bear evil v. 2. The verb denotes a burden ( , cf. Gal. 6:2). Evil thoughts were foreign to this Church. They believed in separation and holiness.

2) Tried false prophets v. 2. Ephesus tested “Christian workers” so that no false brethren preached in the Ephesian pulpit (cf. 2 Cor. 11:13; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 10. Note: Acts 19:13-16).

3) Borne for His Name v. 3. The verb “borne” is the same as in v. 2. It serves notice that the Ephesians were faithful. Indeed, they “labored” ( ), a perfect tense verb pointing to extreme toil for (on account of) the Lord's sake.

4) Fainted not v. 3. This verb fainted ( ) is found in the Textus Receptus. It affirms the Ephesians stood firm in the face of all the ugly things which confronted them. They did not give up under pressure (cf. Heb. 12:3; James 5:15).

5) Hated the Nicolaitans v. 6. This is a positive aspect for the Church. It is the works (deeds, ) which they hate, not the Nicolaitanes. This may be a reference to the delinquent

behaviour of an early sect started by one of the seven deacons (cf. Acts 6:5). Whatever is its reference, it was hated also by the Lord (cf. 2:15). Biblical Christianity and paganism cannot co-exist.

2. The Church's CENSURE GIVEN v. 4

a. Personally In marked contrast with the approval bestowed ungrudgingly the plain fact is “I have against thee” (no “somewhat”). “Have” ( ) is continuous action. He always knows the heart!

b. Verbally The verb “left” ( ) is aorist and points to a decision taken. Note: Not “lost,” but “left.” There was a sad departure.

c. Primarily It's their personal first love which has been let go. Outwardly Ephesus was fine, orthodox, active, but inwardly their heart had changed. While love is not above doctrine (cf. Jn 8:31, cf. 13:35), it is a primary test of one's aliveness in the Lord (Jn 14:21-24; Lk 9:23-26; Phil. 3:12-14; Col. 1:18).

3. The Church's CAUTION NOTED v. 5

a. Remember “Therefore” is an appropriate particle in view of the information (v. 4). A present tense imperative is necessary ( ). What the Church is told to remember is the place from whence they had fallen, a perfect tense verb ( ). Regretfully, the fall had been an extended one!

b. Repent A change of mind, not only the Church's emotion, is necessary ( ). The decision to leave one's love (v. 4) must be countered by a decision to repent (aorist imperative tense). The only kind of repentance which agrees with the Word and is a total mindful one is that indicated here.

c. Restore The third imperative verb is also aorist ( ). “Do it at once” is the significance of this action. Works are being performed, the most necessary is this one! This is primary!

Note: There is a condition, if unfulfilled which bears the threat of “if not.” Failure to repent and restore means the Lord will come (some MSS add “quickly.”) and “remove” the candlestick from its place. The removal of the candlestick in no wise weakens the question of eternal security of all who build on the blood of Christ.

4. The Church's CAPSTONE OFFERED v. 7

a. The Invitation

Clearly there is responsibility in the individual words “He that has an ear, let him hear . . .” The Holy Spirit joins the Lord to address the church and it's Pastor. God give us listening ears!

b. The Provision

There is a ring of continuous victory in the present articular participle “overcometh” ( ). An overcomer is one who in the energy of faith surmounts. No object is expressed. But, to such an one, Christ says He will give that person to eat of the tree of life (cf. 22:2). Here is immortality and incorruptibility promised by the Lord in the very paradise of God (cf. Gen. 2:9; 3:22-34).

Conclusion So you are saved -- bless God. So you serve the Lord with vigor -- hallelujah. So, how goes it with your love for Him? That was the question at Ephesus and it is a question for us today. May the Lord provoke us to love Him fully. Amen.