



LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

June 25th 2017 — Part 8
“The Letter to the Church of Ephesus”



The Prophetic Word to the Churches

Rev. 2:1—“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

“The words of...” — Τάδε λέγει (Tade legei) “Thus says”

Zech. 1:3-4—³ And you will say to them, This is what the Lord Almighty says: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord. ⁴ And do not be like your fathers, against whom the former prophets brought a charge, saying, “This is what the Lord Almighty says, ‘Turn away from your evil ways and from your evil practices.’” *And they gave no heed to listen to me, says the Lord.*

⇒ These words are used to remind the church of Christ’s _____ work.

The Vision of Christ:

(1) He holds the seven stars in his right hand → Christ’s divine, _____ work.

(2) He walks among the seven golden lampstands → Christ’s _____ work.

Jesus’ Knowledge of His Church

His Commendation

Rev. 2:2-3—² “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. ³ I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary.

Observations: 1. The church is _____.

2. The church is withstanding _____.

His Rebuke

Rev. 3:4—But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

“...the love you had at first.”— Commentators are divided as to what exactly is meant by this statement.

Possibilities: *The have abandoned their love for...*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In all likelihood, all three are in view because throughout both the OT and NT, these are all held together.

Lev. 19:2,18b—² “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy...^{18b} you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Luke 10:27—And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

In losing their love for Christ, they had lost their love for _____!

Christ's Solution for the Church

Rev. 2:5a—Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.

Observations:

1. The church is to recall the history of their relationship to Christ.

- The birth of the church in Ephesus is recorded in Acts 18:18-28, 19:1-41. The church began with the preaching of the Gospel among the Jews, but quickly grew as gentiles came to faith in Jesus.

During these days, the church had walked in fellowship with Christ, loving Him and proclaiming the Gospel boldly within the city, with great effect.

They must _____ themselves and their current condition in light of this.

2. The church is to repent of their lost love and return to fellowship with Christ so that they might once again love others in light of their love for Him.

“repent”—μετανοέω (*metanoō*)— To change one’s mind. To agree with what God has spoken and to respond accordingly.

“the works you did at first” →

The Consequence of Unrepentance

Rev. 2:5b—If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

- The promise of Christ is that He will come in judgment upon the church if it persists in sin.

Lampstand Imagery:

Failure to respond properly to the Word of the Lord will cost this church its platform of _____.

A Final Commendation

Rev. 2:6—Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

“the Nicolaitans”— Little is known for certain about this group. It is possible that that this heretical group was founded by Nicolaus (Acts 6:5). The name is a combination of two Greek words (*nikao*—to conquer, and *laos*—people) and means “The people conquerors.”

⇒ This group seems to have taught that Christians were free to engage in sinful behavior.

The Prophetic Call & Promise

Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

- This final call to heed the Word of the Lord once again recalls the words of the OT prophets (Isa. 6:9-10; Ezek. 3:27).

“the one who conquers”— The one who has true faith and who maintains faithful witness to Christ.

“I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

Tree of Life Imagery:

Rev. 22:1-3—¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

The Response of the Church:

1. Be reminded of the _____ intimacy that we have with Christ.

2. _____ our past love for Jesus and _____ of our present complacency.

3. Live with an anticipation of the _____ intimacy and fellowship that we will have with Him in the New Creation.