

THE BOOK OF REVELATION
A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

REVELATION CHAPTER 2:1-7

MEDIA REFERENCE NUMBER SM-505 OCTOBER 19th 2003

THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

“ WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE YOU? ”

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Revelation, End Times

INTRODUCTION

to the text

Revelation 2:1-7

Revelation 2:1-7

“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: :2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; :3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. :4 Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. :5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. :6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. :7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

Several Years ago, The Institute for American Church Growth
Interviewed nearly 9,000 people from Nearly 40 denominations
To measure the “Love” Character of their Churches.

Growing Churches are More Loving.

The results were the same; large churches expressed an obvious love for their members and for those visiting.

Growing congregation scored 35%

Higher than static or shrinking congregations, Regardless of a Church’s Theological Position, It’s Denomination Affiliation or its Location,

***These Churches were attended by a Greater amount of People,
Because of the “Love Factor” experienced in the Church.***

What Scored Less than the Love Factor

Was the church's leadership, its liberal or conservative theology,
it's facilities. And it's evangelistic passion.

People in Growing Churches Reported that They • experience a sense of welcome-ness and acceptance. • A higher level of encouragement and • an overall, loving challenge to Know God more and • to reach out to One another with acts of Love...

The Apostle John

The Author of the Book of Revelation was also the Author of John's Gospel. But how interesting it is to note that John was also the Author of three other little books called the Epistles of John.

And Woven in Through Those Epistles is One Main Theme

1 John 4:7-8

Beloved, let us **love** one another: for **love** is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. :8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is Love.

Where Did John Get That Idea, That Thinking?

From His Jesus

John 13:35

By this all will know that you are My disciples, - - if you have **love** for one another."

Chapter 1 Ended with What We Shall Go Back to Often and that is a very Special Key

Every Lock comes with a Key. And the Book of Revelation has a Key.

Revelation 1:19

Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

Many Today Have Either Lost the Key or They Have Never Had the Key Handed Down to Them.

The importance of the close of chapter 1

THE GRAND OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Write the things; which you have seen,

(chapter 1:1-1:20)

Is Where John Has Been Telling Us of Both His Experience and His Introduction to the Revelation.

And the things which are,

(chapter 2:1-3:22)

Here John has Been Given Seven Letters from Jesus Christ.

Each Letter is a Report on the State of the Local Churches in Asia Minor, but Each of them representing the Universal Church in the Earth and Even Our Very Own Spiritual Pulse.

And the things which will take place after this.

(chapter 4:1-22:21)

John, after the Introduction is made clear, and After the Age of the Church is Complete upon the Earth, record The Judgments and the Tribulations that Shall Come Upon the Earth, which will Herald My Second Coming to Earth.

Sandwiched Between Chapters 1 and 4

Are Chapters 2 and 3 and that is where you and I are living today, right now at this very hour of our personal lives and the life of our church!

Here, Jesus Christ is Saying - Seven (7) Times

"He that has an ear to hear, let him **hear what** the Spirit is saying to the churches."

If Jesus Were to Shout from Heaven to Us or If He Were to Cry Aloud, I Believe that if Jesus was to Audibly Speak to Us This Morning...

"He that has an ear to hear, let him **hear what** the Spirit is saying to the churches."

***These Letters That Jesus has Written Must be Taken Seriously,
For these Letters will Encourage Us and Challenge Us and Correct Us.***

If There was Ever a Spiritual Tune Up to be Given;
This is It for the Christian Church!

#1/5

Each of these letters were actually written to seven real Congregation in the first century.

#2/5

In each letter to each church – Jesus Says;
" I know your works ,

#3/5

In each letter to each church – Jesus Says;
" To him who overcomes "

#4/5

In each letter to each church – Jesus Says;
**" He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what
the Spirit is saying to the churches. "**

#5/5

In each letter to each church – Jesus Gives
**a Description of Himself That Pertains in a Particular
Way to What That Church is in Need of;**

These are Corporate Letters to the Churches Today

Throughout every age and in every church these seven natures of a church exist

These are Personal Letters to each of Us Today

Telling us that in every church these seven natures of a church exist and that in the life of every Christian we may experience anyone of these natures during our lives. – *it’s an exhortation to us today!*

Remember This -

That Jesus Christ is The First and the Last, The Alpha and the Omega, The Beginning and the End, That He is The Lord, The Almighty, The One Who was, Who is, Who is to Come, The One Enthroned in Heaven Above

And He is Awesome in His Appearance

Wearing a Brilliant Robe of Righteousness with a Face as Bright as the Sun, Having Eyes as of a Flame of Fire !

It is Good for You to Know

That All Premillennial, Conservative Bible Students Hold to the Understanding that These Seven Churches also Represent a Chronological Order of the Church Throughout the Ages.

And Those Scholars Believe that We are Living in the Days of the Laodicean Church Period – I Hold Strongly to That View !

The of “Ephesus” = Desirable

It was a Wealthy and Powerful City of the Roman Empire, Ephesus had a Bank on Nearly every corner. It boasted of its diversity and it’s open religions. Many temples existed there but none as grand as the temple to Diana - The Seventh Wonder of the Ancient World.

425 ft long and 260 wide, 100 ft high. It had a combined seating of 24,000 people

Because of its location, affluence and beauty, Ephesus was also a place of great commerce. The New York of its Time. – it was known as the Central Bank of Asia.

**THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS ,
A CHURCH WITHOUT LOVE**

WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE YOU?

1.) Are we sincerely desiring Jesus’ presence? vv. 1

Are we sincerely desiring Jesus’ presence

1.) Jesus holds the church in His right hand v. 1

*“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,
These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand,*

Revelation 1:20

...The seven stars are the messengers (real pastor/teachers) of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven (real, actual) churches.

*These things says He who **holds** "Them" – the seven messengers!*

Grk Hold **krateō** **krateo**, *krat-eh'-o*; to have in the grip. To have seized with dominance. To control by direct use. = to have all authority over another.

Meaning That; The Execution and Implementation of God's will for His Church is to Flow Through His Leader who is Under His Direct Ownership. (the Pastor/Teacher is Jesus' Slave)

Jesus is Saying;
"No Matter What Your Pastor, Your Church, The People, You
Are under my absolute authority as your Lord and Savior!"

Are we sincerely desiring Jesus' presence

2.) Jesus *walks* among His church v. 1

who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands

The Atmosphere of a Church
(What Does it Feel Like?)
Is It Warm, Inviting, Is It Caring and Reaching Out?

Like A Medical Exam – Jesus Approaches His Church

There's Good News and There's Bad News to Every Exam

1.) Are we sincerely desiring Jesus' presence vv. 1

WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE YOU?

2.) Are we truly willing to obey Jesus in all things? v. 2-3

:2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; :3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

Are We Really Willing to Obey Him in All Things?

**Jesus Gives Them the Results of His Examination
The Diagnosis is This;**

On the Surface
The Church at Ephesus would be a Pastors Dream Church

It was a Happening Church
Active, Busy, Large and Influential with Vision !

Jesus Says; “I know...”
That you are right on in 10 of 11 points

1.) I know your *works*

this is the works spoken of the apostle James. Works that flow out of true faith in God. It a “Works” that proves that your Faith is Real

2.) I know your *labor*

this word means that they served so faithfully and so long that when they stopped, they would hit the bed exhausted. It speaks of the fact that it cost them something to serve Jesus – and they loved it so. There are so few, even hear in this church.

3.) I know your *patience*

having a happy heart and glad face to continue onward in difficulty. They had a great attitude. - There were no Whiners. They got better when things got hotter.

4.) I know that you *cannot bear* those who are evil.

They were committed to confronting evil and correcting it in the lives of its congregates. Church discipline was being applied. I know of a very few churches who obey Christ in this area – that’s why churches today are so weak and polluted. Sick from within.

Are We Really Willing to Obey Him in All Things?

5.) you’ve *tested* those who say they’re apostles and aren’t

They were a church that took church seriously, they protected the people against false prophets and self-proclaimed leaders.

6.) I know you have *found* them to be liars;

These false Christians, pretend apostles, were openly and publicly exposed before the body – there is a false teaching that is native to the cults but is also found in the Catholic Church = the heresy of apostolic succession. Mormonism claims it, the Jehovah Witnesses claim it. – there is no such thing!

7.) I know you have *persevered*

They never gave up. They persisted, they fought on against an evil world and the attackers of the church. They weren’t quitters.

8.) I know you have *patience*, or better = *endurance*

*The desire to stay with it, to stick it out and make it work.
To be a solution, not the problem.*

9.) *I know you have **labored** for My name's sake*

To plod, to put one foot ahead of the other until you reach your destination. "You've continued on for me" says
Jesus!

Are We Really Willing to Obey Him in All Things?

10.) *I know you have **not become weary**.*

*They never lost sight of the fact of why they were doing what they were doing.
They knew that what they were doing had a purpose.*

10 Wonderful and Commendable Characteristics
that Any Church Would Love to Hear in a Report

*My,
This church had listened well to its Spiritual Leaders over the Years...*

WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE YOU?

3.) *Are we very much in love with Jesus Christ? v. 4*

:4 Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. :5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. :6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. :7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Are we very much in love with Jesus Christ?

1.) *It depends upon "where" our hearts are at v.4*

"Nevertheless I have ~~this~~ against you, that you have left your first love"

In The Original Language it Reads Better;

Nevertheless, It's "I against You" Because you have not included me, you've went without me.

GRK **Left** ajfi+hmi aphiemi, af-ee'-ay-mee; from 575 and i°hmi hiemi (to send; an intensive form of ei\mi eimi, to go); to send forth, in various applications (as follow):—cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up.

No human being on the planet then and now could have ever known what Jesus
knows...

HE SEES THE INSIDE OF THINGS
WITH HIS PERFECT, X-RAY KNOWLEDGE.

1 Samuel 16:7

a human being looks on the outward **appearance**, but the LORD looks on the heart.

I Want to Ask You a Couple of Questions to Drive This Home.

**" How do I Look to You This Morning Church?
What's Going on, on the Inside Me This Morning Church? "**

**The Amplified Version of
Revelation 2:4**

What qualities you have do not matter any longer all because of this;
what I have against you is: you do not love me now as you once did at the first.

You've left your first love

What is it to leave your first love? **Let me tell you what it doesn't mean**

"First Love" - Doesn't Mean Loving One Another

"First Love" - Doesn't Mean Loving His Word

"First Love" - Doesn't Mean Loving His Return

Because According to Jesus Christ,

You Cannot be Excited about Loving His Word or His People or Even His Coming Back to Earth – Unless you are "in Love" with the Person of Jesus Christ

"First Love"

was those early days when you and Jesus made a majority. When your awareness of Him was in every conversation, you felt Him in every situation. Your Relationship with Him was the Most Important thing in Life. You were Reckless for Jesus but ever so slowly you got busy, you got important, you got to manage life on your own – still a Christian, still going to church, still serving...

You Left that Honeymoon Love

That is Why some of you Older Christians (not age)

You've become so refined and mature that you've fossilized in your pews.

- **You do nothing, With no one, but for you!**
- **You Once Shared Jesus with Others –
because you couldn't keep your mouth shut**
- **You Once Gave of Your Time –
because your time belong to Jesus**
- **You Once Gave of Your Money –
because you believed that it would reach Others for Jesus**

and so your new name could be Lazarus!

You've been resurrected from the dead – but now you're wrapped in old stinking grave clothes

Give Me a New Christian Any day

And they'll build the church in light speed - By Loving Jesus Christ

Love Jesus Christ First

Love Jesus Christ First

Love Jesus Christ First

Love Jesus Christ First

Love Jesus Christ First

**It Says They “Left” Their First Love.
They didn’t “Lose” It**

“When we Leave Off Loving God Passionately
When We Leave Off Serving Him Faithfully”

**Go Back Now to That First Love
That Kind of Love for God and Christ**

They Had Left Their Simple Love for Jesus. They're hearts had grown cold.
All on the inside, invisible to all but God

Are we very much in love with Jesus Christ?

2.) It matters “what” we do about it now

v.5a

A Diagnosis to Bring About a Cure

:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works...

Every Good Doctor has a Treatment

Here's Jesus' Prescription

#1

Remember!

Ever Been in Love?

(your friends called you stupid then – you'd did dumb things and you loved it)

Remember (to rehearse:—to mention to yourself and others; to put back into the mind) therefore from where you have fallen

(take time to go back and ask yourselves, 'What was my early Christian life like then? What did I hold dear then? I couldn't wait to get to church then! I wanted to sing in the choir... and I don't even sing!')

Jesus Says
"Be Silly with Me Again"

#2
Repent!
Calling this Apathy, This Negligence a Sin in Our Lives and Deciding Now to Change it

#3
Repent!
and do the first works,

The "Loving Jesus" Kind of Things

Do it cuz you can – *the feelings will follow!*

If you're married you know what I mean
"do it cuz you can – the feelings will follow"

Love Works That Way – often as a sacrifice

Jeremiah 33:11

The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the **sacrifice of praise** into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.

Feelings Follow Action Every Time

Personally

This week I heard Him say to me again;
#1 – Sit with Me early, while it is still dark, beat the day.
#2 - Renew your Bible time with me Jack
#3 – Tell others about My love for you... for them

I Found My Heart Beating Again – with Childlike Joy!

Kids love to hang out and just be with their dads;
And if something happens or they do something – it just makes it all the better

Are we very much in love with Jesus Christ?

3.) Now is the moment of truth – always NOW!

V.5b

***or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand
from its place—unless you repent.***

You Will Lose Your Witness – You won't be Shining Anymore!

Get your love-life in Order Now -

Or Else I will Take Away Whatever Ability You Have of Being a Witness,
You Ephesians - You're on the Brink of Spiritual Uselessness.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

A Church That - used to Be

What do we learn from Ephesus?

That you can be so Biblically correct, so orthodox, you can have a full bulletin of events, you can have a wonderful heritage, you can be so right, that you can become dead right..

What Am I Describing to You now?

What I'm thinking about, has silver and gold and beautiful wood,
Soft luxurious fabric, adequate space, in America, everybody is familiar with it..

G U E S S W H A T I A M D E S C R I B I N G T O Y O U ?

It's a Coffin - a Casket
And inside is a dead silent body, no longer speaking, no longer crying, no longer caring

A Respected Body, Nicely Dressed Up, with No Place to Go

WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE YOU?

4.) *Are we determined to make the change* vv. 6-7

~~:6-But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.:~~7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who overcomes** I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."'

To him who overcomes