

## EPHESUS

### Int.

1. Aim: To point out what the letter means and some applications to us.
2. Rev. 2:1-7 - first letter of the seven
3. City of Ephesus - it was a wealthy, cultured, and corrupt community
  - a. In Roman Empire
    - i. Most Important city in the Roman province called "Asia"
    - ii. Located at the mouth of the Cayster River - 6 miles inland
    - iii. Road 70 ft. wide ran from the city to the harbor
    - iv. It was a "free city" - had its own assemblies and its own magistrates
  - b. Temple of Diana - or Artemius
    - i. One of the 7 ancient wonders of the world
    - ii. Probably the largest building in existence at that time - 425 ft. long 220 ft wide. 60 ft. high. 127 columns
    - iii. This building attracted more visitors than any other building of ancient history
    - iv. In the center of the Temple was the Image of Diana, which was said to have fallen from the sky.
    - v. Bee- sacred insect and the symbol of the goddess Diana- found on Ephesian coins
  - c. Theater
    - i. The city was also noted for its magnificent theater
    - ii. It was built on the side of Mount Oreosus and would seat 25,000 - Acts 19:29
  - d. Library of Celsus with over 15,000 scrolls
  - e. Modern city - Called Selcuk - Population 10,000

#### 4. Church in Ephesus

##### a. Second Journey

- (1) Paul made a short visit there
- (2) Left Aquilla & Priscilla
- (3) Acts 18:18-28
- (4) Apollos preached there and baptized many according to John's baptism

##### b. Third journey

- (1) Paul preached there on his 3rd journey for about 3 years
- (2) Had to rebaptize them for John's baptism was of no benefit at that time - it was no longer in effect.
- (3) His preaching began to affect the worship of Diana and other magic cults - a riot resulted - Acts 19
- (4) Books of magic burned

##### c. Letter to them - Ephesians

- (1) Written by Paul
- (2) About Christian living

##### d. Paul's last visit - Acts 20:17-38 was with the elders

##### e. Timothy lived and preached in Ephesus for a while - I Tim.1:3,4 II Tim. 1:18

#### 5. Notice the letter to the Church at Ephesus.

#### 6. Rev. 2:1-7

## Discussion

### I. INTRODUCTION -

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

#### A. Addressed to the Angel

1. Angel = messenger
2. Some man who would read this letter to the church - he would read all 7 letters
3. Message is meant for the church

#### B. Identification of sender

1. "He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand"
  - a. Stars refers to the angels - Rev. 1:20
  - b. Christ was holding the 7 stars - Rev. 1:16
  - c. They would have to depend upon Jesus for all their knowledge
2. "Who walketh in the midst of the seven Golden candlesticks"
  - a. Candlesticks refer to the churches - Rev. 1:20
  - b. By walking in the midst he knows all about them
  - c. The churches cannot hide from Him - He knows
  - d. Heb. 4:13

## II. WORDS OF PRAISE -

Rev.2:2-3 "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and that thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; And hast borne, and has patience, and for my name's sake has labored, and hast not fainted."

### A. "I Know"

1. Introduces all the letters like this
2. He knows everything about all of us

### B. He knows:

1. "Their works" - every activity undertaken for Christ's sake
2. "Their labour" - toil, labouring under persecution - opposition to false teachers
3. "Their patience" - toils produced fruit of patience and longsuffering --  
stedfastness, constancy, endurance

### C. "Thou canst not bear" Evil and false teachers

1. Would not allow evil men to continue undisciplined
2. Tough on false teachers
3. Paul had warned them about this - Acts 20:29
4. They tried those who claimed to be apostles - I Thes. 5:21 I Jn. 4:1

### D. "And hast borne"

1. They endured, they were stedfast, they stood firm
2. Were unmoveable
3. They had suffered much, had been sorely tried, but all had been cheerfully borne for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ.

E. "And hast not fainted"

1. They had not grown weary of labour
2. Had not grown tired in their attempt to do good.

### **III. WORDS OF CONDEMNATION** - V. 4

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

A. Had one fault - heart trouble

1. They were praised for the good things they had been doing
2. But that did not balance out the things that were wrong.
3. God does not deal with man in any way that ignores or tolerates sin and wrongdoing.

B. "Because thou has left thy first love."

1. Their zeal and enthusiasm for Christ had gone
2. They had departed from the right motive for serving.
3. They were not as devoted as they were in the early stages! They were tired and lazy. They were slowly dying.
4. "Left" - abandon, to leave, go away from

#### **IV. EXHORTATION and WARNING** -

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."

##### A. Three things they must do:

###### 1. Remember

- a. Consider or compare your zeal with what it was at the beginning
- b. Beginning - they were excited and enthused but now they were bored and cold.
- c. Remembering should cause them to...

###### 2. Repent

- a. A change of mind which results in a change of life or conduct
- b. They need to change back to what they once were.

###### 3. Do the First works

- a. Does not refer to the acts of salvation
- b. An erring Christian does not have to obey the Gospel again
- c. Must repent and return to his first love which he had at the beginning.
- d. First works of a Christian are to add the Christian Graces - I I Pet. 1:5-7
- e. When we do these things our love for Christ will be regenerated.

##### B. Warning of extinction if they failed

1. The candlestick refers to the church
2. The congregation would cease to exist if they did not follow his advice and return to their first love.
3. "A church can continue only for so long on a loveless course."

**V. PRAISE** -

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

A. But this thou hast:

1. He had found something wrong
2. But he is quick to add another something that was good.

B. Hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitians

1. The Nicolaitians held to the view that Christian liberty was a license to commit sexual sins.
2. They taught that it was a matter of indifference to commit adultery or eat things sacrificed to idols.
3. They hated that which Jesus hated and this pleased Him and He praised them for it.

**VI. WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT** -

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."

A. He that hath an ear, let him hear

1. Those who will listen have a message from God.
2. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Mt. 5:6
3. God speaks and we must hear!! Then Obey! Those who are not willing to hear will never learn his message of life.
4. Man has the ability to hear and understand God's message!
5. An open ear is one that is receptive to the teachings of Christ.

B. "To him that overcometh"

1. To conquer, thus to overcome all kinds of evil that would harm the church.
2. Live victorious over sin all the days of their life!
3. They repent and return to that first love

C. "tree of life"

1. The tree of life was given up in the garden of Eden because of sin; now through a life of obedience we can regain it."
2. Spiritual joys to be received in heaven

D. Which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

1. A place especially prepared for enjoyment
2. Heaven will be a place of happiness - a mansion or paradise!!

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Lessons for us: [4 qualities of a great church]

a. #1 WORKING CHURCH

- i. Teaching the gospel
- ii. Edifying the church
- iii. Ministering to those in need

b. #2 PATIENT CHURCH

- i. They did not quit - were not asleep
- ii. Labored year after year

c. #3 TAKES A POSITION AGAINST EVIL

- i. They could not allow error to continue
- ii. We must stand against all that is opposed to the truth

d. #4 HAS THAT FIRST LOVE

- i. Remember that first love of the truth - love to pray, read and attend worship.  
Love to work.
- ii. Enthusiasm, emotion, and energy abounded.
- iii. Do not hear "I have done my share: I have taught all of the classes I am going to teach, I have given all the money I am going to Give."
- iv. Let us do all we can as long as we live.

2. The church in Ephesus died:

- a. They did not repent
- b. We do not know how long it was before the candlestick was removed.
- c. But it was, and the truth has not been preached there for Centuries.
- d. Today we do not have the freedom to preach the truth in that country.

3. Message from Ephesus:

- a. God knows what we are doing
- b. Our good things will not cause God to overlook the weaknesses we have
- c. Remember our first love - get busy and work
- d. Get hot for Christ and be pleasing in the sight of God.

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