

We finished last week with John's JAW-DROPPING Revelation of WHO Jesus Christ is - & WHAT He Looks Like, Today

When Jesus BEGAN this Revelation of himself to John
Jesus was STANDING in the Midst of the Lampstands (churches)
He was CLOTHED like a Priest, w/ a Sash of Righteousness
His HAIR was shining like perfect Holiness
His EYES were a Flame of Fire
His FEET were prepared for JUDGMENT
His VOICE was like Niagara Falls
In His HAND He held the Messengers of the Churches
From His MOUTH came the Two-Edged sword
His FACE was shining like the Sun

& we said - if we would just get a CORRECT PICTURE of WHO Jesus Christ is Today

It would RADICALLY CHANGE how we Feel & Respond to the things going on around us in this life

& so – WITH that image of WHO Jesus Christ is Today

We are going to See Jesus
Immediately Turn His Attention - to the Church

Let's Pray

So – from our Last Msg - John is still TREMBLING
From Seeing the Real - Glorified Christ

& AS Jesus is picking John up
from John falling on his face as if he were dead

Jesus says - - I want to talk to you about MY CHURCH
I need you to get a Message to MY CHURCH

Jesus CARES INTIMATELY about His Church
Jesus is ACTIVELY INVOLVED in His Church

& IF we will Receive it - Jesus will Lead & Guide &
Transform His Church - For HIS NAME'S SAKE

We just need to make sure we have - EARS to HEAR
What the Spirit is SAYING – TO The Church

These 7 letters to the Churches
Contain Super Powerful - Life Changing Messages

That WILL speak to Each ONE of us
IF we will have - Ears to Hear

& so - It is critical we don't RUSH by them
to get to "The Good Stuff" . . .

Because - THIS IS THE GOOD STUFF!!

**No Matter - HOW SOON the rest
of the Book of Revelation TAKES PLACE**

No Matter - WHAT all the Exact details ARE

**No Matter - WHO the World Players are
that are DEPICTED in the Rest of this Book**

NO MATTER - All of THAT

**These Truths - in these 7 letters should
RADICALLY IMPACT how we live for Jesus Christ - TODAY**

So - John is still trying to Stop Hyperventilating

**When Jesus says to him in - Revelation 2:1(a) (NLT)
1 “Write this letter to the angel (messenger) of the church in
EPHESUS . . .**

**Jesus is going to START with John’s OWN CHURCH
which I think is a critical lesson in itself**

Jesus can take care of - THAT Church

We don’t have to worry about - THAT Church

FIRST - Jesus wants to talk to US about - OUR Church !!

**& So – Jesus says to John - “Let’s start by talking about
YOUR Church there in Ephesus”**

Ephesus - Was John's **HOME church**

& **from there** John **OVERSAW** –
ALL the churches these **Letters** were **written to**

The Apostle Paul spent **THREE years** there
starting the **church** – **(Acts 18 & 19)**

& **Ephesus** had **become** the **Super-Church** in that **Area**
& **it had** most likely **BIRTHED** the **other 6 churches**

& **the message** from **Jesus** - **to** this **Super-Church** - was

You've gotten **REALLY GOOD** at all the **church stuff** –
But . . . WHERE IS THE LOVE ???

Jesus Starts his **Letter** – With **WHO He Is**

Revelation 2:1(b) (NLT)

*. . . This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars
(messengers) in his right hand, the one who walks among the
seven gold lampstands (the church):*

- 1) **Jesus** Christ has the **Messengers (Pastors)**
of the Church - **IN HIS RIGHT HAND** (*picture of authority*)
- 2) **Jesus** Christ Is **walking**
in **THE MIDST** of the **Church** - **Today**

Referring to the **intimate** - **personal** - **specific knowledge**
t **Jesus has** of **each church**

& the first sentence of Revelation 2:2 (NLT) says
2 “I know all the things you do . . .

This **Greek word** for **KNOW** – is **OIDA** - and it **means**
to **have personal eyewitness knowledge**

Please hear **me**
JESUS KNOWS - HE KNOWS !!

In EVERY ONE of these 7 Letters to the Church

Jesus says - I KNOW !!

His **EYES** are like a **Flame of Fire** - **HE KNOWS**

& **That** can be our **Greatest COMFORT**
OR it **can be** our **Greatest FEAR**

(again) Revelation 2:2(a) (NLT) - Jesus says
2 “I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and
your patient endurance . . .

For **every church** - **Except One** - **Jesus** begins
with a **COMMENDATION** - & an **ENCOURAGEMENT**

& **here** - **Jesus** is **COMMENDING** the **church of Ephesus**

For their **HARD WORK** & their **PATIENT ENDURANCE**

The Church of Ephesus – was what we would call today
A MEGA CHURCH

- They were a LARGE church – With a Celebrity Pastor (John)
- They were Planting other churches (*the other 6, plus more*)
- They were doing a TON of Ministry WORK
- They were in the midst of a Huge, & Very PAGAN City
that was BUILT around the worship of the Goddess Artemis

& it takes a lot of hard work, and a lot of Perseverance,
to build up - & keep everything RUNNING

at such a large church, with so much going on

& So The Church of Ephesus
had become really good at Running The Church

But – Here is the WARNING

for years I had a statement on my desk that said

*The greatest threat to your love for Jesus,
is your service for him*

BECAUSE - *it is very easy for the constant running of the church
to REPLACE your genuine love for Jesus*

& We will see – THAT is exactly what was happening
to the Church of Ephesus

BUT - Jesus is not finished with his COMMENDATIONS yet

Revelation 2:2(b) (NLT)

2 . . . I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars.

Jesus COMMENDS the church

For **NOT tolerating - EVIL people**

**& the remainder of the verse begins to DEFINE
What Jesus means by "EVIL people"**

He says - ***You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars.***

Jesus is NOT talking about SINNERS

The church is a hospital for sinners

He's **referring to people who bring Division, Discord,
& their own Doctrine – INTO the church**

**& Jesus says – I commend you for NOT tolerating
the people who do this in your church**

& Jesus cont's in Revelation 2:3 (NLT)

3 You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

The **church of Ephesus is STRONG – They have learned
to Stand their Ground - & Suffer WITH Jesus**

& If we'll Skip Down to Vs. 6 - Jesus GOES BACK
to the commendation he started here in V. 2

Revelation 2:6 (NLT)

6 But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, just as I do.

According to the Early Church Fathers

The Nicolaitans taught a Doctrine
of Compromise with the World

They taught that a total separation
between Following Jesus Christ
& the practice of Occult Paganism - was NOT NECESSARY

Jesus says very clearly – that He HATES THAT
& He commends the church - for HATING IT as well

So - there's a Bunch of GOOD CHURCH STUFF
Going On in Ephesus

They've got a BUNCH of the Good Church Stuff
down – really GOOD

BUT – There is Just ONE PROBLEM

& it is an absolute DEAL-BREAKER for Jesus!!

(look back up to) Revelation 2:4 (NLT)

4 “But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first!”

The ESV says - *But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.*

The NKJ says - *I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

Some translations make this vs sound like

It’s their Love FOR JESUS – they have abandoned

Some translations make this vs sound like

It’s their Love FOR OTHERS– they have abandoned

BECAUSE - this sentence

can be correctly translated both ways

So the NLT uses BOTH translation options

You don’t love me or each other as you did at first!

**You have ABANDONED – the love you had at first
for BOTH - Jesus - AND for Each Other**

Jesus says to the church in Ephesus

You’re DOING what is RIGHT

But - you’re NOT doing it IN LOVE anymore

→ → →

Your **ACTIONS** are **RIGHT** - But they're
Not COMPELLED by your **Love FOR Jesus** anymore

In **2Cor 5:14** - **Talking** about us being **Ambassadors for Christ** -
Paul says - *For the love of Christ compels us !!*

This is the **AGAPE Love** – that **Rom 5:5** says was
POURED OUT into our **Hearts** **BY** the **Holy Spirit**

& **Jesus says** to the **Church of Ephesus**

You are **Running** the **Church Well** –
But – **WHERE IS THE LOVE ??**

The **Love OF Jesus** - & Your **Love FOR Jesus**
Is **NOT what** is **compelling** you **anymore**

We really need to HEAR what the **Spirit** is **saying** to **US** today

We **may** be **Doing what is Right**
But **Jesus says** - **WHERE IS THE LOVE ?**

& If we **Neglect** - the **Priority** of **HIS LOVE** (both Vertical & Horizontal)
Then **Our WORK** becomes **Prideful Self-Righteousness**

& **Prideful Self-Righteousness** - is **easily used** as a
Tool of the **Enemy** - to **DRIVE** people **AWAY** from Christ

It's the **LOVE** of **Christ** - that **DRAWS** people
Being RIGHT - **Without His Love** - **REPELS** People

And **IF** we **ABANDON** Our **Genuine Love** -
FOR Jesus - And **FOR Each Other** . . .

If **we Abandon** That Love
We become WORTHLESS to God

1 Corinthians 13:1–2 (NLT)

1 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing.

Good Church

WITHOUT a Fervent **VERTICAL Love Relationship** with Jesus
& **WITHOUT** a Fervent **HORIZONTAL Love** for Others

Makes us a **Noisy GONG**, a **Clanging CYMBAL**
& of **NO True USE** to **God**

& **So** - **Let's Have** – **Ears To Hear**
What **Jesus SAYS**

If we have **TRADED** our **Genuine LOVE for Jesus**
For **Religious Rightness**

Then we are in VERY Serious Danger

& the REMEDY – Jesus CALLS US to is

RETURN to the LOVE we first HAD When Jesus SAVED US
& the Holy Spirit poured His LOVE into our Hearts – for others

& So – Jesus is going to give us “THREE ‘R’s”

to SAVE US from the CONSEQUENCES

of ABANDONING our LOVE for Him

& ABANDONING LOVE as our Compelling Force for others

The THREE ‘R’s’ are

REMEMBER - from where you have fallen

REPENT - Turn around, go back in the right direction

RETURN - To Loving Christ & Loving Others, as you did at first

It’s all in - Revelation 2:5 (NLT)

5 Look (Remember) *how far you have fallen! Turn back to me*
(Repent) *and do* (Return to) *the works you did at first . . .*

Remember – Repent - Return

FIRST - We’ve got to Recognize, REMEMBER, & Confess

That we have drifted away from LOVE being

our Compelling Factor – Both VERTICAL & HORIZONTAL

NEXT - we've **got to REPENT**

Which **means** to **TURN & GO** In the **Opposite Direction**

FINALLY - our **Confession** & **Repentance** Must **Lead Us**

To RETURNING to the **LOVE** that **Drove us**
when we **first** were **Saved**

God's Design has **ALWAYS been** for **LOVE**
to **be** the **Compelling Factor** in our **Life with him**

The 10 Commandments (Exo 20) are
4 Commandments of **Vertical LOVE** for **God**
6 Commandments of **Horizontal LOVE** for **others**

Jesus Simplified it in the **Gospels as**
The Greatest Commandment is **LOVE** (in **2 parts**)

LOVE for God - & LOVE for Others

& **when THAT LOVE** no longer **Compels us** – **Motivates us**
Then we are in **REAL DANGER**

The 2nd half of Revelation 2:5(b) (NLT) says
***5 . . . If you don't repent, I will come and remove your lampstand
from its place among the churches.***

THAT IS SERIOUS - & it **could mean** one of **Two Things** → →

1) It could mean Jesus would Allow the Church to DIE

2) It could mean that Jesus would REMOVE HIS PRESENCE
from the Church

***BUT - isn't a Church WITHOUT the Presence of Jesus Christ
Actually WORSE than NO Church at all??***

So Jesus BEGINS with some ENCOURAGEMENT
But then He ENDS with a VERY STRONG WARNING

The Question is - Will we RECEIVE the WARNING
Along with the Encouragement

Skipping down to Revelation 2:7(a) (NLT) (we already did v.6)
7 *“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and
understand what he is saying to the churches . . .*

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the
churches . . .*

He who has a Heart - Open to the Lord
Let Him RECEIVE what the Spirit is saying

Our TOP PRIORITY - is our Love Relationship with our LORD

We NURTURE that - & we GUARD that - Above ALL ELSE

Our SECOND PRIORITY is an Extension of the FIRST

The Agape Love – that God has poured into our Hearts

MUST BE what **COMPELS US**
To **LOVE** - & **SERVE** - **One Another**

& finally - Jesus says - at the end of Revelation 2:7 (NLT)
7 . . . To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.

If you have **put your Full Faith & Trust** in **Jesus Christ**
Then you **ARE ALREADY VICTORIOUS** – **In Him**

& **Jesus WILL Give** you
fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God

<p><u>& SINCE</u> this is <u>TRUE</u> - <u>How much MORE</u> should <u>you be</u> <u>Nurturing & Protecting</u> your <u>LOVE FOR JESUS</u> & <u>HIS LOVE THRU YOU</u> - <u>Toward others</u></p>
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Let's Pray