

The Lion and The Lamb

Revelation 2:6-11

- John the Apostle is left for dead on the barren, rocky, seemingly God forsaken Island of Patmos after a failed attempt to boil him alive by the Roman Emperor Domitian. This man like Caesar Nero before him was an egomaniac, claiming deity and demanding worship from his subjects, refusal to worship him was met with a death sentence, which is exactly what John received.
- But it is here on Patmos that John is given The Revelation of Jesus Christ, and often this is the place where the things you truly know about The Lord are often learned on our own “Patmoses”. It’s the place when you are given a medical report that doesn’t look good, a business venture that fails, a child acting up or out, divorce papers served, it’s in these places where you are faced with a choice to either launch out in spiritual rebellion, or wait at the feet of Jesus for fresh revelation.

V6-11

- John left for dead at almost 100yrs of age is never more alive, as he is writing a letter that’s being dictated to Him by Jesus Himself to the seven churches is Asia Minor. The first church Ephesus begins with a commendation for its spiritual fervor and faithfulness, as it has endured persecutions from within and without and has stood for truth despite the attacks, for that Jesus applauds their good deeds.
- But The Lord looks deeper than the external and He goes into the internal and its here where the church of Ephesus is found wanting as instead of drawing closer to The Lord as their actions seemed to suggest, they had drifted further away from The Lord, causing Him to expose to all that they had left their first love. Meaning instead of their actions being done from love it was now because of duty, So Jesus tells them exactly what He wanted them to do **1. Remember 2. Repent 3. Return.**
- If they would not then Jesus tells them that He would remove their lampstand from its place, that means their light and His presence. So they would continue as an organization but would no longer be a true representation of a Church of Jesus Christ, instead it would become “**the church of Ichabod**” where the glory of The Lord had departed > **1Sam 4:21**. History tells us in the writings of the church father Ignatius they did just that being praised for their love and doctrinal purity.

- **V6-7** before signing off from them Jesus gives them one more compliment: That they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. We are encouraged to love the things that God loves and hate the things that He hates > **Ps 97:10, Rom 12:9**, and that is what the Ephesians had done. Who were the Nicolaitans and what were their deeds?
- Irenaeus wrote in the second century that the Nicolaitans were followers of a man named Nicolas who was one of the seven ordained as deacons by the Apostles in **Acts 6:5**. That's who they were their deeds come from their name Nicolaitans means **"to conquer the people"** and we know John wrote of this in **3rd Jn 9-11** of a sect that lorded over the church and robbed the people of their liberty. They initiated what we know today as "clergy and laity" a false division that was never taught in the NT.
- Jesus our Savior Who is so rich in love and mercy says of their deeds **"Which I hate"** those are some strong words, proving that The God of love hates sin and wants His people to also hate sin when its being committed and spread in His Church. **V7** shows that this is not just for the seven churches but all those **"who have an ear to hear"** so all Christians throughout the century this letter is meant to speak to you.
- If you listen there is a promise of a reward, that we will eat from the tree of life, this is the place where God is, and where man was suppose to spend eternity until sin entered in. **Gen 3:22-24** The Lord graciously and mercifully put a Cherubim with a flaming sword in front of the tree of life so that man wouldn't eat of it in our sinful state thus being condemned to live forever in sin, now as an overcomer we will be allowed to eat of the tree of life and never be apart from The Lord again.
- **V8-9** the church in Smyrna also receives a letter, Smyrna was a large, very rich, beautiful city, a place of learning and culture, so it was full of pride, as it called itself **"the glory of Asia"**. It was known as a trade city as it had a road that led into it from a valley where the river Hermus flowed, so they made a harbor and placed their markets and wares there and it flourished with merchants coming through daily.
- Smyrna was also known for its wine, and anytime you mix money and alcohol together you know you are going to have a mess on your hands, and that's exactly what was going on in Smyrna. History says it was deeply committed to idolatry having a street called **"golden street"** with temples to Apollo, Aphrodite, and Zeus, among others, but it was also fiercely loyal and devoted to the Roman Emperor.

- It built the first temple to Dea Roma, the goddess of Rome, the spiritual symbol of the Roman Empire. To this church Jesus chose to use His title from His initial appearance to John in **1:11,17** to speak of His Eternal character, as The First and The Last are title that only belong to The Lord Yahweh, according to **Is 41:4, 44:6, 48:12**. After reading this alone how can anyone say Jesus never called Himself God, as He is The One telling John what to write according to **Rev 2:1**.
- Jesus tells them that they serve a risen Lord, victorious over death, and since death could not hold Jesus it also cannot hold His people. **V9** Jesus also says I know your works, tribulation, and poverty, He also knows those who say they are Jews but in truth serve the synagogue of Satan. In looking at this although Smyrna was rich and prosperous the Christians were poor, also He knew the abuse they endured at the hands of those who say they are Jews but have the heart of Satan.
- **V10-11** this church is under pressure, poverty, and persecution, and yet The Lord tells them do not fear what they are about to suffer. Then they are told what that looks like, prison, trials, persecution, even death, but to remain faithful, for in the end they will receive the crown of life. For those who receive this reward the second death (**Hell, the lake of fire**) will have no effect on them > **Jn 16:33**.