



The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST

Chapter 2:1-7

“Church of Ephesus: The Apostolic Church (1st Century)”

Go for God!

Jesus said in Revelation 1:19-20 - *Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*

- A “*mystery*” in Scripture is a previously hidden truth now divinely revealed. The number “*seven*” is a sacred number to the ancient Hebrew people. *Seven* is used often in the Bible to symbolize *perfection, fullness, abundance, rest, and completion*. This number was also considered holy or sacred by other cultures of the ancient world.

- C.I. Scofield yields thought provoking insight to this mystery, he writes, “The messages to the seven churches have a fourfold reference:

(1) *local*, to the churches actually addressed;

(2) *admonitory*, to all churches in all time as tests by which they may discern their true spiritual state in the sight of God;

(3) *personal*, in the exhortations to him “*who has an ear,*” and in the promises “*to him who overcomes*”; and

(4) *prophetic*, as disclosing in two areas the phases in the spiritual history of the church:

(a) a pattern that has been repeated again and again through the centuries; and

(b) the progress of its spiritual state until the end of the Church Age.”

- The “church” is mentioned nineteen times from chapters 1 through 3, in chapters 4 and 5 we find the church in heaven. We know this from chapter 4:1 where it says, “*after these things*” twice, after what things, after the things of the church age on earth, also in chapter 5:9-10 we find the church in heaven worshipping the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. From chapter 6 through 19 we read about the seven years of Tribulation upon the earth. The church is raptured before this horrible time of judgment.

- Each of these seven churches can be framed with historical reference:

(2:1-7) *Ephesus - The Apostolic Church (1st Century)*

(2:8-11) *Smyrna - The Martyr Church (A.D. 100 – A.D. 314)*

(2:12-17) *Pergamum* - The Worldly Church (A.D. 314 – A.D. 590)

(2:18-29) *Thyatira* - Church of the Dark Ages, “Romanism” (A.D. 590 – A.D. 1000- continues today)

(3:1-6) *Sardis* - The Protestant Church, “Reformation” (A.D. 1517 – A.D. 1800)

(3:7-13) *Philadelphia* - The Revived Church (A.D. 1800 to Rapture)

(3:14-22) *Laodicea* - The Apostate Church (Last Days & into the Great Tribulation)

- Let's begin to unfold the *mystery of seven stars and golden lampstands*:

I) The Church of *Ephesus* (2:1-7) – “*The Apostolic Church*” (1st Century)

- Before we read our passage let us look into the birth of the church at Ephesus in Acts 18:18 – Ch. 19

(v1-3) Seven words of COMMENDATION:

(1) “*I know your works*”- The word know in Greek is “oida” and refers to complete and full knowledge;

(2) “*I know your labor*” – Speaks of a continuous, exhaustive dedication;

(3) “*I know your patience*” – A perseverance in trying circumstances;

(4) “*I know that you cannot bear with those who are evil*” – They practice church discipline upon those who were evil.

(5) “*I know that you have tested and identified the false apostles*” - They were dedicated to the truth, sound doctrine; (Acts 20:28-31)

(6) “*I know that you labored for My name's sake*” – They sought to preach Christ deity, crucifixion and resurrection;

(7) “*I know that you have not become weary*” – A tireless church!

(v4-5) One word of CONVICTION: – “*You have left your first love*” – Notice they did not lose their first love; they left their first love!

- The CAUSE: Lack of priority, apathy, compromise, carelessness, indifference to others, cynical, judgmental, self-righteous, selfish, prideful, jealous, envy, immorality, love of the world, the eyes, and the flesh.

- The CURE: (3 steps)

Step #1 - **REMEMBER** what we have lost and cultivate a desire to regain that close communion once again.

Step #2 - **REPENT**—change our hearts—our minds—our will—our actions through confession of sin (1 John 1:9,10; Psalm 51; Luke 15:11-31)

Step #3 - **REPEAT** the first works, which suggests restoring the original fellowship that was broken by our sin and neglect. For the believer, this means prayer, Bible study, obedient service, worship, evangelism, making disciples.

- Warren Wiersbe writes, “Labor is no substitute for love; neither is purity a substitute for passion. It is only as we love Christ fervently that we can serve him faithfully.”

(v6-7) **Two words of CONSULTATION:**

(1) *“Hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans”* – John MacArthur writes, “A problem in Pergamos also (vv. 12–15), this heresy was similar to the teaching of Balaam (vv. 14,15). Nicolas means “one who conquers the people.” Irenaeus writes that Nicolas, who was made a deacon in Acts 6, was a false believer who later became apostate; but because of his credentials he was able to lead the church astray. And, like Balaam, he led the people into immorality and wickedness. The Nicolaitans, followers of Nicolas, were involved in immorality and assaulted the church with sensual temptations. Clement of Alexander says, “They abandoned themselves to pleasure like goats, leading a life of self-indulgence.” Their teaching perverted grace and replaced liberty with license.”

(2) *“To him who overcomes”* – How to overcome? 1 John 5:3-5 - *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

- *The “Tree of Life” is found in Revelation 22:1-5 - And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*